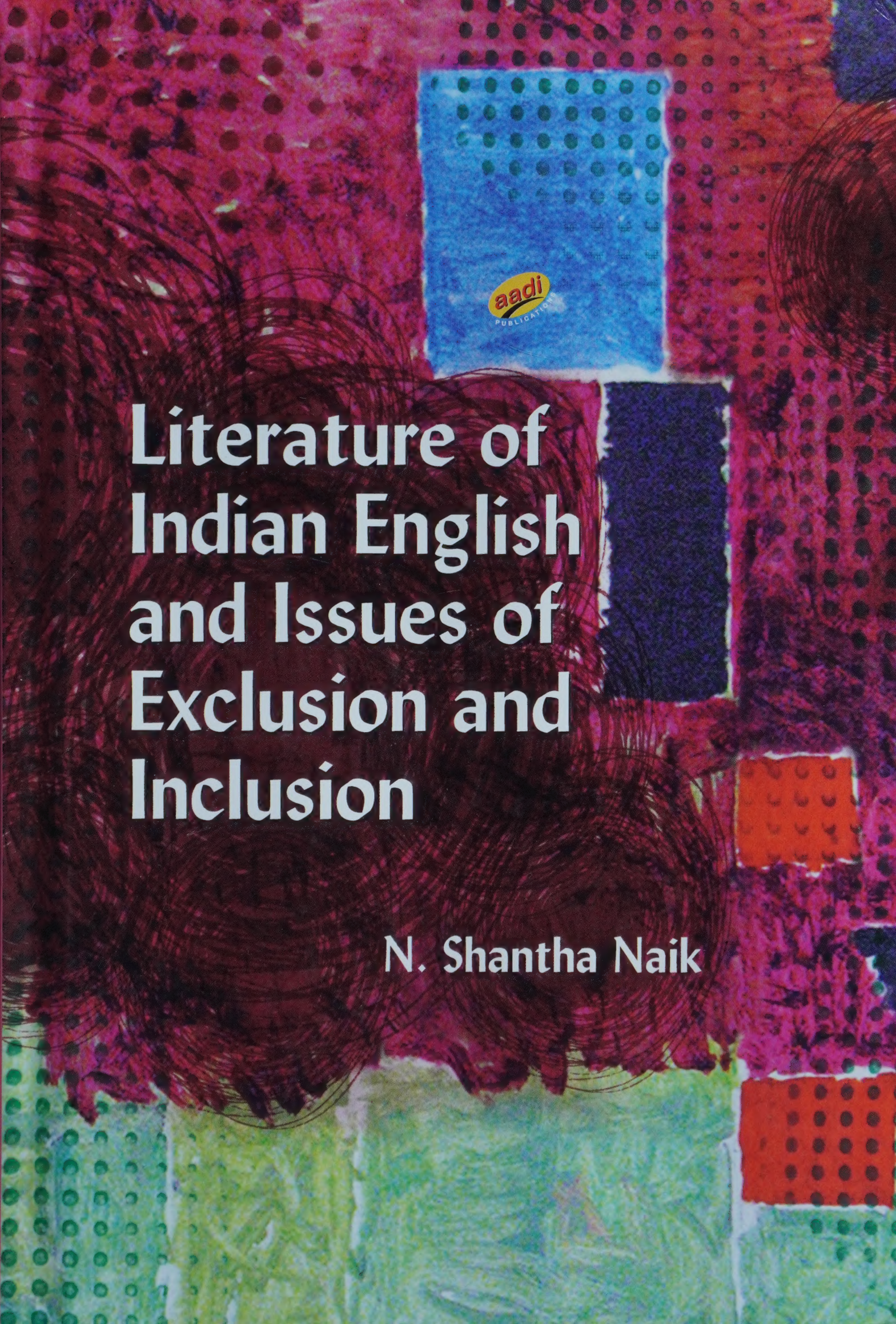

Literature of Indian English and Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion

N. Shantha Naik

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Foreword

Literature of Indian English and Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion is an interesting departure from traditional literature to a study of Dalits and Adivasis literature. As we all know, Literature is an important component that drives us and enriches our lives. It is a very stark reflection of our lives and culture.

While reflecting our lives and culture, Literature also plays a crucial role in understanding our past lives and society. We expect our literature to also show up those who are excluded from the mainstream and hence throw light on what has been excluded. Growing impact of social media and information technology like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc., apparently has not had any significant influence on the lives of Adivasis and Dalits. However, new literature which has emerged from these two neglected communities which was also excluded from mainstream literature is undergoing faster metamorphosis. In future course of time literature may not be restricted to any given genre. It will cross all the daunting boundaries to reach all the people.

Adivasi and Dalit writers are dealing with new expressions and experiences as they have now started reading and writing. They are continuously struggling with different and new media to reach out to their favourite readers. Due to changes in technology and nature of engagement with the readers, they have switched over mainly to the Electronic and Social media. Television soaps, reality shows and serials have been running for years and have not been showing any signs of ending soon. The traditional listeners of radio have stopped listening to radio, albeit FM and internet radio have become a new craze.

Adivasis started documenting their life experience through short stories, novels, plays, poetry and other genre, which once were popular with readers and are now unable to attract more readers. Likewise, other forms of communication like the traditional folk plays, music concerts, etc., are also unable to demonstrate greater involvement and engagement of the audience. While the readers are continuously expecting newer ideas, the writers and producers are unable to keep pace and address their expectations. While the spectrum of media offerings has expanded the number of genuine readers the takers for traditional media are decreasing, leading to widening communication gap. This gap is widening day-by-day. Hence, an effort is made to reduce the gap in this book "Literature of Indian English and Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion", which is a compilation of more than twenty-six scholarly essays written by experts from different parts of India. I have no doubt that this collection of essays will be a very valuable asset to the researchers and scholars who are carrying out their research. I wish them and all readers successes in their endeavour. This book is dedicated to those who are faceless and un- registered in historical documents.

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Preface

Indian social condition is not congenial to the Adivasi, Dalit and minorities who are broken, exploited, marginalized and kept away by the social hierarchy in India. Though they feel happy in outer layer, actually they are not satisfied with the treatment they are getting by the upper caste people. Who are more privileged? Are Dalit? Adivasis? Other backward castes? Or minorities? Privileged? The answer is "No". The reason for their backwardness is education, inequality, uneven distribution of wealth and land. The phrase 'cow headed beast' is apt to those who call secular to themselves, these people are more dangerous than a fundamentalist, because at least we can identify the fundamentalist as our enemy. But the seculars are black-hearted white people, they have a clear hidden agenda in their mind and they walk with that agenda. The other dangerous group is of those who identify themselves with one group and always show off as the firm believers of that particular ideology but they keep on changing their ideology and identify themselves with the other opponent group. Most of us have heard about the two-headed snake the second category people belongs to this group. The first category of people are like chameleon. The privileged people apply butter to the tip of the nose of the neglected people of India; they shower thousands of lies and baseless false promises to the innocent people at receiving end but they never help them to enable them to get success in their life. There is a politics in literature. Only those belonging to one category are believed as great writers which is not true; those who have real feelings and emotions are lacking the language part. Those who are liars fortunately have good language without originality. It is most

unfortunate that the scholars failed to reach the originality. This book is an attempt to identify the real problem of the society. I am sure that this book will knock your heart and disturb you for a movement.

Prof. N. Shanthanaik

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1

Multiculturalism in Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*

Ratna Prasad K.S.

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the shinning jewels of Indian women writers. Multiculturalism is a theme that echoes throughout Mukherjee's waork. Multiculturalism is a policy that emphasizes the unique characteristics of different cultures in the world. It is a public policy approach for managing cultural diversity in a multi-ethnic society stressing mutual respect and tolerance for cultural differences within a country's borders. Multiculturalism is a theme throughout Mukherjee's work, her characters are often Indian women who are victims of racism and sexism driven to desperate acts of violence when they relies that they can fit in to neither the culture west nor Indian society in an interview with Bill Moyers she states "Multiculturalism, in a sense, is well intentioned, but it ends up marginalizing the person". *Jasmine* belongs to the genre of literature that deals with issues of immigrant life and cultural hybridity. In *Jasmine*, in 1989, Mukherjee tries to unravel the complicated layers of cross–cultural confrontations throughout a series of adventures which the protagonist undertakes during her odyssey from Punjab to California via Florida, New York and Iowa. *Jasmine* builds up the proposal of the amalgamation, combination and absorption of the East and in the West through a young Hindu woman who leaves India for the U.S. following her husband's assassination.

The aim of this paper is to showcase how Mukherjee's protagonist Jasmine evolves with culture changes, attempts for self realizations and finally wields control of her destiny.

Keywords: Immigrants, Culture, Identity root.

Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* , published by Grove Pr, Viking Books and Virago Press Ltd. in 1989, is a novel that tells the story of a young Indian woman who tries to adapt to the American way of life in order that she can survive. Jasmine, the title character, and also the protagonist of the novel, changes her identities several times so that she can live up to the culture she thrust herself into.

Jasmine happens to be one of those novels by Bharati Mukhrjee that have been much acclaimed by the critics. It has often been described as the projection and depiction of the hypersensitive mind of woman. Jasmine, the central character, rather the protagonist of the novel travels through events and situations in the novel in such a way that each of her steps and activities gains remarkable dimension, making the literary work stand out with pride.

In the words of Abidi Hussian, "Culture is a sense of ultimate value possessed by a particular society as expressed in its collective institutions, by its individual members in their depositions, feeling attitudes and manners as well as significant forms which they give to material objects. In the context of multiculturalism one's attitude towards other social system, habits, customs is very important."

The concept of coexistence began with the writings of Mulk Raj Anand. The cultural conflict between East and West is buried in the works of Raja Rao . In the words of Ashok Chaskar, "The term 'multiculturalism' was primarily used in U.S.A. in connection with the demand of the black and other minority communities for equal representation in American society including schools and colleges.... It insists that American society has never been 'white' but has been multi-racial having diverse backgrounds. As a movement, multiculturalism seeks to underscore the values of distinctly different ethnic, racial and cultural communities which cannot be allowed to melt into a common culture".

The backdrop of *Jasmine* is based on the idea of the marriage of the East and the West, with a story that portrays a Hindu Indian woman whose husband is murdered. Being widowed at merely the age of seventeen, Jasmine leaves India for the United States. Through a series of events including her facing a number of problems and even getting raped, she turns to be a health professional.

The way the author has developed the character of the protagonist and has made her go through the journey from the India to the United States and shift from one culture to the other in the course of living, immigration, change of culture and multiculturalism can automatically be traced to be among the most important as well as most obvious themes of *Jasmine.*

Jasmine, rather, Jyothi , born in Hasnapur in India, is the most beautiful and clever child in her family. The way she has been controlled dominated by the male members of her family, and the way it has been shown as taken for granted clearly reveals the side of male dominance over the female in Indian culture. Like the girls and women in most of the Indian families, Jyoti's life is also controlled by her father or brothers.

Culture is typically characterized by its tendency to change in various forms, is also reveled through the events in the novel. Marriage at an early age is still a part of culture in some parts of India. Yet , Jyoti has the mind to think in a different way as young generations in most cultures do. Though Jyoti does not deny to get married, she does have the desire to marry an educated man who does not believe in the dowry system. Thus she is married to Prakash, a man who is based in the United States and has the modern way of thinking.

It is after marriage that Jyoti's immigration becomes quite obvious . At the same time, Jyoti's shift from the one culture to the other and also the shift from one identity to the other occur. Prakash encourages her to study English after they shift to the U.S. He also gives Jyoti a new name Jasmine. This change of her name is much symbolic of the change of her identify as well as of her shift from the Eastern culture to the Western one. However, though Jyoti was quite happy in her martial life, it is too short-lived as Jasmine is widowed after Prakash is murdered.

The second instance of immigration in Jasmine's life seems to have much to do with culture and also with multiculturalism. The time that Jasmine had spent in the U.S. with Prakash had made her adapt to the Western culture that is not, at least as superstitious as that of India. She has to choose either performing sati according to the rigid tradition of her family, or to lead the life of Jasmine in America. Now she becomes an illegal immigrant to Florida, symbolizing her journey of transformations, displacements and shifts of identities.

In the course of migration and shifts of identities, and adapting to different cultures, the events also shows how America is perceived as a land of opportunities. Jasmine leaves her oppressive family in India and chooses to live in America, even if as an illegal immigrant. She did so for she had the hope that her search for a more fruitful life would be metalized in the United States. Prakash also had the same idea about America as a land of opportunities since both of them travelled to the United States after their marriage with the ambition of starting off a 'new life'.

Jasmine's journey towards the Western culture begins as her identity as typical Hindu widow as she meets people like Tay or Bud. Her

identities as 'Jase' as Taylor called her, and as 'Jane', as Bud called her, are not only the reflections of her adapting the other.

Bharati Mukherjee has depicted her transition as a positive and optimistic journey. It clearly reveals that the author herself is quite sympathetic to her protagonist in the novel and wants her not to be a victim of the rigidity of the Indian culture. Jasmine tries to and does create a new world of hers that consists of new established cultural identity through constant incorporation of new skills, desires, and habits. It is true that there have been changes in her attitude. At the same time, the change in her relationships with the men is also remarkable. Again, though Jasmine offers Du to help him in his homework she ultimately finds it impossible for her since Du was studying Teddy Roosevelt's presidency, a subject that Jasmine finds quite foreign.

Conculsion

The way the character of Jasmine has been portrayed, especially her role as an immigrant to the United States. However, the attitude and the outlook towards life that Jasmine has, makes her stand out as a unique character, deserving to be the protagonist of a novel. Sheer will power and strong determination made Jasmine survive the atrocities leashed upon her. In real spirit the family life chosen by the robust willed Jasmine was multicultural. As a social chronicler *Jasmine* stresses the need for a shared future in a gobal multicultural scenario.

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2

The Issues of Women Writers in Indian English Literature

Md. Muzammil K.

Women is a power within herself, women has played a major role by entering into the field of English Literature. Women showed her desire to write to compete with men writers and also women energize other women writers to enter in the world of literature. With the power of writing she tries to bring a drastic change in the society where women have been suppressed by men and by the tool of writing she can express her freedom. Writing by women has given a new dimension to the English Literature in the 20th century. Women writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminism. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writing in Indian English Literature.

The novels of Indian English women writers consists of the latest burning issues related with the women as well as those issues that have existed in the society since long. Indian women writers have been exploring feminine subjectivity and deal with the themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood.

Indian English writing started with the author like Sarojini Naidu, it encourages the other women writers such as, Mahaswetha Devi and Shashi Deshpande and many others. "Women in today's male dominated world is the main theme of their works", and also they capture the spirit of Indian culture and its traditional values.

Mahaswetha Devi born in 1926 is an Indian author and comes from the Brahmin family, who was renowned for her work in *Rudaali*. While *Rudaali* may be a small work but it is a powerful story, covers so many

important aspects of society, such as poverty to the caste system and Indian funeral practices as well as the role of women in a strong patriarchal society.

Essentially, this story concerns the life of Sanichari. From the caste she was born into being unfortunate enough to be born on unlucky Saturday. Her life continues to see tragedy. Sanichari sees many of her immediate family pass away leaving her in permanent state of insecurity. Somehow Sanichari continues to cling tightly to her dignity and this allows her to discover opportunities to allow her to support herself. The realities of poverty regularly struck for them, nothing has ever come easy just daily struggle for a little maize gruel and salty exhausting. Through mother hood and widow hood. They are tied to the money lender. While those people spent huge sums of money on death ceremonies just to get the prestige. This quote really is central to Sanichari story and the community that she is a part of as well as her motivation to become a professional mourner. Those that to have money use it to improve their status. So, she become Rudaali.

Sanichari says "in this village everyone is unhappy. They understood suffering meaning that suffering is easier to bear if everyone is going through the same thing". Life was so hard for Sanichari but she managed to survive with the help of her community.

Professional mourning has a long tradition in parts of India and in Rajasthan in particular, it is seen as important to give the diseased person a good funeral so that in death their status is elevated. So, she found it interesting that in the days prior to individuals passing away they were not cared and left to sleep in their own excrement but once they were dead they were given the grandest funerals.

So, we can see here the sufferings of women in the name of caste, class and gender as well as it satires on the royal society.

Shashi Deshpande was born in Karnataka in 1938, to a famous dramatist and Sanskrit scholar. According to Shashi Deshpande, she did not make a conscious decision to be a writer but stumbled into being one out of boredom. Shashi wanted to express her feelings about the society and its various aspects and it was the perfect platform to make the reader aware of any burning issues.

Her novels are deeply rooted in India and this is the specialty of her writing. The characters, settings and the conflicts are inherently Indian. Above all, she is a storyteller. Her short stories have been widely anthologized throughout the country. Shashi Deshpande has also won the 'Sahithya Academy Award' for her novel *That Long Silence*.

That Long Silence, is the story of Jaya, the housewife who is seen always engaged in searching her own identity. Set typically against the Indian backdrop, *The Long Silence*, raises that eternal question whether woman lives for them or for someone, their husband or children.

That Long Silence is an acclaimed novel by Shashi Deshapande. In this study the author reveals an intriguing picture of an ordinary middle class educated woman. The name of the protagonist is Jaya who lives with her husband Mohan and two children Rahul and Rati. The story entirely revolves around Jaya, her married life and her role as a dutiful wife. She plays the role of an affectionate mother, dutiful to her in-laws and her relatives. It gives a simple enchanting scenes solely expressed by the author. According to the author husbands don't give attention to wives' emotions, likes and dislikes. The author expresses the emotion with vivid details like that of lovemaking, relationship with children, etc. She reflects her lifestyle, her role clarity, is she living for her or for someone else, etc.; throughout the story she is engaged in searching her identity as an individual. In this story one situation arises when husband and wife's relation was given offbeat. Two individuals though very intimate but couldn't relate each other in times of feelings or understandings. Many married women might find some instances similar in their everyday lives after reading the story. Author has done a good job in expressing intimacy, sexual feelings are expressed in its natural tone.

That Long Silence by Shashi Deshpande is based in the context of contemporary Indian writing in English. Deshpande is one of the most understood yet confident voices, who explores individual and universal predicaments through the female psyche.

The silence of women symbolizes helplessness, but men take it as symbol of woman's contentment.

This is a problem not only with Jaya but also with all women writers. They turned their mind and ways of life according to the need and expectation of men. Since Mohan thinks, for a woman, to be angry is to be unwomanly, Jaya set her mind not to be angry even in writing. She confines her thoughts and defines her role according to the expectation of her husband. Naturally, she has lost her 'true self'. Anger which has been internalized has turned her to be nervous and incompetent. She says:

> "....no woman can be angry. Have you ever heard of any angry young woman? ...A woman can never be angry, she can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated".

Jaya married Mohan as he had decided to marry the convent educated, cultured Jaya. After the marriage also Jaya found him a stranger, intimacy

with him had seemed a grotesque indecency. In their physical union he would ask, "Did I hurt you?" and her answer is "No". It is sex that bring both of them together not love. She realizes love is a myth, without which sex with the same person for a lifetime would be unendurable.

Jaya has shaped her life according to the desire of Mohan and loses her own self and identity.

Jaya's self examination of her married life has brought to light that she is partly responsible for the loss of her real life. The seventeen years of their married life brings boredom, dullness and monotony instead of intimacy and friendliness. In her effort to be an ideal wife, she loses her life in the name of sacrifice.

Conclusion

Women writing in literature play a crucial role by upbringing the social evil, tragedies and sufferings and feelings of women in literature. According to the women writers, writing is the main source to bring a change in the society. By and large we can conclude by the two eminent works of Indian woman writers, such as Mahaswetha Devi and Shashi Deshpande, i.e., *Rudaali* and *That Long Silence*. In these two works we have seen that how women find her identity, self respect and sufferings of women, poverty, lavishness of royal society, caste system and misconceptions, irony in their works.

3

Dr. Paul Brunton—On The Awakening to Intuition

Prof. V.M. Deshmukh

Dr. Paul Brunton, whose works are best sellers in various languages, was born in London in 1898. He started his career in journalism, but in the course of time, he developed an interest in comparative religion, mysticism and philosophy. He has travelled extensively in the orient, living in Yogis, mystics and holy men. He is one of the few students of India and the Orient with the ability to illuminate his understanding for the reader.

The Secret Path is one of the most popular of Paul Brunton's bestselling books. His work presents a full detailed description of the technique which the author pursued in the East and especially in Himalayan ranges. A system which rewarded him with amazing spiritual experiences.

This paper attempts to throw a light upon yogic wisdom of Dr. Paul Brunton, which is relevant in modern context. Worry, stress and tension are the results of the fast paced, crazy lives we lead today. Bombarded by information and images all the time, we long for peace and tranquility, which needs calm, cool and serene atmosphere around us. But we are swept away in the untamed current of frantic life. And now all this hectic living is affecting the performance of a human being at every level. Hence, at this crucial situation, Dr. Paul Brunton's wisdom may show a light to ills of modern humanity.

Humanity today stands at the gate of reality. Man is learning to recognize and desire the world of spiritual being. He is rapidly apprehending the significance of that deeper being which is hidden behind the mask of the personality. To find that deeper being intuition

and its function to function consciously in the world of truth in which it dwells—this is man's immediate task and for this the years of modern distress have prepared him.

When you start moving inwards, deeper into meditation, awareness; consciousness, you will become more and more aware of the mysterious, the miraculous, and you will become aware of the fact that existence basically is unknowable where thinking cannot go, something else is to rise and lead us on. When thinking fails we may find this state of intuitive guidance by delicate and careful search.

Intuition is like instinct because you cannot do anything about it. It is a part of your consciousness, just as instinct is part of your body. You cannot do anything about your instinct and you cannot do anything about your intuition. But just as you can allow your instinct to be fulfilled, you can allow and give total freedom to your intuition to be fulfilled. And you will be surprised at what kinds of power you have been carrying within you. Intuition can give you answers for ultimate questions. Intuition is a seer, it has eyes. It sees the truth—there is no question of thing about it.

The great elemental secrets of life are so simple that few see them. People are complicated, intellects are complicated, not life. Therefore Dr. Brunton says : Treasure in your heart and carry out in your mind the memorable saying of Jesus that Except ye become as a little child yet shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Tremendous theological speculations are not necessary to understand the simple truths of the spirit.

Dr. Paul Brunton has proposed to teach simple technique for how to awaken our intuitions. "When the student has finished his breathing exercise successfully then he should proceed to address to the mysterious darkness which environs his mind.

Who am I ?

Who is this being that dwells within this body ? Let him address these silent questions to himself, slowly, intently, and with utter concentration of soul.

The let him wait for a few minutes, meditating quietly and without effort upon the questions. Thereafter, let him make a silent humble request, a half prayer if he wishes, directed to the self in the very centre of his being, to reveal its existence to him. The words in which he formulates this request may be his own, but they should be simple, brief and direct. Having made request or silently uttered the prayer let him pause and wait expectantly even confidently for response. There should be a profound humility in his soul when he is asking for the divine revelation to come to him. For before the divinity can begin to teach him

through its own self-revelation he must first become teachable, i.e., humble."[1]

> "During this pause which follows his silent request, he should suspend his thoughts so far as he can by adopting an attitude of 'listening-in' for a response. After waiting period of two to three minutes, he may repeat his request and then pause again. After the waiting period of three or four minutes, he may repeat it for a third and final time. Then he should wait patiently, expectantly, for period of about five minutes, his body still, breathing slow and quiet, and his mind becalmed. This ends his meditation. The key to a correct understanding of this stage is remembering that it is the subconscious reaction to your conscious effort which is now all important. Now you must wait for the subconscious to make its appearance. Do not overstrain, do not over do give the self some credit for intelligence of its own, for action of its own."[2]

Sometimes you may pass through a period when no response comes. In such situation patience is important. We must wait humbly for the revelation of the Infinity which is within man. Henceforth the student must watch carefully for the first confirmatory signs and token that he is upon the right way, the first faint evidences of the stirrings of his deeper self within him such signs or tokens are shown us by the soul, but they are often misunderstood or simply not noticed. The self's voice is first heard like a soft breath, and he must pay till heed to it. He must look upon them with respect and veneration as ambassador from a higher realm. For the quiet monitors are but heart of a dynamic force which is yet to come and which will transfuse and interpenetrate his body with heavenly power. In such strange moments he discovers what is a almost a second self within. For there is something which occasionally makes itself felt in this manner in the mysterious depth of the soul. What it is we hardly know, but what it say we may. Know "All that is best in these That am I," is its silent voice. It is one with us.

The student who has completely mastered all the earlier stages is now in a position to benefit markedly by the help of a genuine Adept, who can now rapidly bring the intuition to birth for him by certain secret methods. One inevitable result of all these practices will be that your attitude towards thing, people and events will gradually change. You will begin to express the qualities which are natural to the self. The qualities of noble outlook, perfect justice and the treatment of one's neighbour as oneself.

> "As we pass into the inmost centre of our mind, we arrive at a state where thought itself stops still, and where there seems at first to be noting—except the blissful consciousness of being. This is the self that we really are",

"Turning away from the world,
I have forgotten both caste and lineage,
My weaving is now in the infinite silence.
Kabir, having searched and searched himself,
Hath found God within him."[3]

—these lines were written many hundreds of years ago by Kabir, the poet-weaver of Benares.

Conclusion

For intuition is a totally different approach, it is an innocent approach with no logic. It is the approach of the child when he is born and opens his eyes for the first time. He knows nothing but he sees everything, although he cannot say. He cannot discriminate. But he sees everything. He cannot describe, he has no words, but that does not mean that he is not seeing. Intuition is pure seeing—is not a process, it is quantum leap.

Notes

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2. Brubon, Paul, *Hermit in the Himalayas,* Rider and Company, London, 1969: 178-202.
3. *Osho News Letter.* Osho World Foundation, C-5/44, Safdarjung Development Area, New Delhi.

4

The Issues of Subaltern Dalit in Indian English Literature

Anita Lakshmi

Introduction

The word Dalits comes from broken ground downtrodden or oppressed. Those previously known as untouchables.

Depressed classes, harijans are today increasingly adopting term Dalits. It refer to one's caste rather than class; it applies to those members of the castes in which they have born with the sigma of " Untouchability".

Because of the extreme impurity and and pollution connected with their traditional occupations. Dalits are outcastes falling outside the traditional four-fold caste system consisting of the hereditary:

1. Brahmin,
2. Kshatriya,
3. Vishay, and
4. Shudra classes.

They are considered impure and polluting and are therefore physically and socially isolated from the rest of the society.

Dalits represent a community of 170 million in India and 17 per cent of population.

Dalit Literature

Dalit literature or literature about the Dalits, an oppressed Indian caste under the Indian caste system, forms an important and distinct part of Indian literature. Dalit literature emerged in the 1960s, starting with the Marathi language, and soon appeared in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu, and

Tamil languages, through narratives such as poems, short stores, and most autobiographies, which stood out due to their stark portrayal of reality and the Dalit political scene.

History

One of the first Dalit writers were the sage Valmiki who wrote the epic *Ramayana* and sage (Maharastra Literature Society) in Mumbai by people including Jyotiba Phule and Bhimrao Ambedkar. In1993 Ambedkar Sahitya Parishad, Wardha organized the first Akhil Bharatiya Ambedkar Sahitya Sammelan (all India Ambedkarite literature convection) in Wardha, Maharashtra to re-conceptualize and transform Dalit Sahitya (Dalits literature) into Ambedkar Sahitya, after the name of the Dalit modern-age hero, scholar and inspiration Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who had successfully campaigned against caste discrimination and was a srong advocate of Dalits' rights. Ambedkar Sahitya Parished then successfully organized the Third Akhil Bharatiya Sammelan in 1996 and became a voice of advocacy, awareness and transformation. Since then ten similar Sahitya Sammelans, or literary gathering, were held in various places.

The Ambedkar Sahitya Parishad was officially formed in 1992 with the goal to foster among people common ideals of humanity and to provide a platform to those who are inspired by Ambedkar's thoughts and philosophy.

Baburao Bagul (1930-2008) wrote in Marathi. His first collection of stories, *Jevha Mi Jat Chorali* (English when I had concealed my caste) published in 1963, depicted a cruel society and thus brought in new momentum to Dalits literature in Marathi; today it is seen by many critics as an epic portraying lives of the Dalits, and was later made into a film by actor director Vinay Apte. Gradually with other writers like, Namdeo Dhasal (who founded Dalit Panther), these Dalits writing paved way for the strengthening of Dalits movement.

Modern Dalit Literature

According to K. Satchidanandan, Dalit Literature began to be mainstreamed in India with the appearance of English translations of Marathi Dalits writing. An anthology of Dalits Literature, edited by Mulk Raj Anand and Elenor Zelliot, and Poisoned Bread; Translations from modern Marathi Dalit literature, originally published in three volumes and later collected in a single volume, edited by Arjuan Dangle, both published in 1992, were perhaps the first books that popularized the genre throughout India.

But the orgins of Dalit writings can be traced back to Buddhist literature; Dalits Bhakta poets like Gora, Raidas, Chokha Mela and Karmalaela; and the Tamil Siddhas, or Chittras (6^{th} to 13^{th} centuries C.E.)

many of whom must have been Dalit going by hagiographical accounts like Periyapuranam (12th century). But it was after the democratic and egalitarian thing such as Sree Narayan Guru. Jyotiba Phule, B.R. Ambedkar, Sahodran Ayyappan, Ayyankali, Poykayil.

Appachan and others cogently articulated the sources and modes of caste oppression that modern Dalit writings as a different genre began to emerge in Indian languages.

According to satyanarayana and Tharu, although it is possible to identify a few Dalit writers from earlier times, the real originality and force of Dalit writings, which today comprises a substantial and growing body of work, can be traced to the decades following the late 1960s. Those are the years when the Dalit panthers revisited and embraced the ideas of Babasaheb Ambedkar, and elaborated his disagreements with the essentially Gandhian mode of Indian nationalism, to begin a new social movement. In the following decades, Dalit writings become an all-India phenomenon. This writing reformulates the caste question and reassesses the significance of colonialism and of missionary activity. It resists the reduction of caste to class or to non-Brahmanism and vividly describes and analyzes the contemporary workings of caste power.

Asserting the importance of Dalit literature Arundhati Roy has observed: I do believe that in India we practice a form of apartheid that goes unnoticed by the rest of the world. And it is an importance for Dalits to tell their stores as it has been for colonized peoples to write their own histories. When Dalit literature has blossomed hand is in full stride, then contemporary (upper caste) Indian literature's amazing ability to ignore the true brutuality and ugliness of the society in which we live, will be seen for what it is; bad literature. It will become irrelevant.

Besides these autobiographies narrating the experiences of caste based social structure, there are others narrating the tribal experiences. Living out of the well-bound limits of the society, the tribal communities were never a part of the Indian ethos though they followed the same religious practices prevalent with the Hindu fold. They were always looked upon as aliens by the society. This feeling of being alienated is effectively illustrated by Laxman Mane in his autobiography entitled *Upara* (An outsider), by Laxman Galkwad in *Uchalya* (A lifter) and by Kishor Shanthabai Kale in *Kohatyacha Poor* (son of a kohti), *Sham Kum Limbale's Akkaramashi* (being illegitimately born) narrates a unique story of being illegitimately born. The narrator is a son of a Dalit woman who is lured into physical intimacy by a rich landlord and was deserted by him and consequently by the society. Limbale delineates what it is to be a son of dersted woman, how painful and agonizing is the process of

growing up in a society in which sexual exploit ation and casteism are the prevalent trends.

Dalit poetry is an effort to use symbolic images based on the experience and they break many old poetic conventions of literature. In the images they neither follow Eliot nor Pound or Freud. Instead they choose historical references and myths from a Dalit's point of view. The primary motive of Dalit literature is the liberation of Dalits. Dalits struggle against castiest tradition has a long history, for example, in Kannada, it goes back to the first Vachana poet of the 11th century, Chennaih, the cobbier, the 12th century Dalits saint Kalavve challenged the upper castes in the following words:

"Those who eat goats, foul and tiny fish;
Such, they call caste people
Those who eat the sacred cow
That showers frothing milk for Shiva.
Such, they call out-caste's"

Kondiram's description of the Mahars' lifestyle thereby functioned as caustic indictment of the *Manusmriti's* Brahamnic Hindu laws. Such laws, he says, not only made the Mahars wear a black thread around their necks as a sign of their non-human status, but excluded them from all social contact. Kondiram writes in his poem:

Live in a hut which you must build outside the village!
That is what the Brahmans write in their books.

As non-human Kondiram points out, the Mahars could have no wealth or valuable possessions. He writes:

Ati-shudras cannot tend cows and buffaloes,
But how on earth can they ever obtain anything like a horse or an elephant!
Their wealth is dogs and asses, rats and mice.
They can keep the clothes from corpses,
But can't have any new cloths.
They must eat out of broken clay pots,
And dress up finely by wearing iron ornamental!

Devibharati's short story Bali is a noteworthy piece of Dalit writing. Through its narration, discourse, transgressions, counter aesthetics, and signification it has become a brilliant piece of Dalit literature.

Conclusion

Thus to Dalits writers, history is not illusionary or unreal as Hindu metaphysical theory may make one to believe. That is why authenticity

and liveliness have become hallmarks of Dalit literature. Unfortunately Dalits have seen too many expansive total revolutionaries' to be happy with such formulations, especially when Dangle adds: "Class antagonism of the Marxist model does not exist in India". But perhaps what was more striking is their indifference towards the whole question.

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5

The God of Small Things—A Tragedy of Transgression

D.N. Pawar

Indian writing in English nowadays is known and popular for its thematic concern as well as for the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity at confrontation. Unlike the earlier writing, which was restricted just to the imitative of English models, the modern Indian English writing has touched the social cord and has brought forth realism at its heart and more importantly has been revolving, unfailingly, around 'man'—the stock of prime interest.

Among all the attributes, 'the man' in fiction has been a reflection of Platonic as well as Freudian theories. Thus touching each and every niche and corner of human life, the modern novelists, men and women alike, have discovered all the aspects, minor or major, and have presented life like a dissected frog on the table. Though the writing of the modern time mainly focuses on the individuality, the other issues are not subsidized or cannot be left untouched. Nay, the writers cannot keep their characters aloof from traditional, cultural or social dogmas. Here begins the confrontation as the characters tend to seek, nourish their individuality and find them shuttling and split between individuality and submissiveness. This tug of war has found enough space in most of the novels.

The present paper aims at one such tug of war in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things'. The novel is a three generation story, packed with a series of events and characters who represent succeeding generations. The first generation is a tradition or culture in itself—twisted and shattered, whereas the second one is a revolutionary and the third is ruined.

The novel is seen in many different lights by numerous renowned critics. To some, it is about communism. To some it is about untouchability and to some it is about the illicit relation between an upper caste divorced woman and a *Parvan* and also about ruined childhood. But Arundhati Roy herself discloses in one of her interviews that her novel is about biology and transgression. She just suggests one word—'transgression' that encompasses the whole content of the novel.

The characters in her novel, Ammu and Velutha, are no less than Shakespearean tragic heroes. The *catastrophe* in the novel is stunning enough that matches with the Aristotelian one and has a *cathartic* impact on readers. The novel itself proves transgression as it begins in the middle of the story and ends when the life begins in the real sense.

This longing for transgression is inherent in every body. Sometimes it becomes prominent and sometimes it is suppressed thoroughly (?), by the thrust identity- social, traditional and cultural. Sometimes this quest for individuality is an outcome of the plight. Sometimes it is the emotional compulsions that lead the characters to a condition where the things go rather worse. This cycle—restlessness, revolt, disillusionment and pathos, goes round and round and shatters the world of human psyche utterly. Though this has been a cliché in every other Indian writing in English, it's worthy written and worthy read as well.

The characters in *The God of Small Things* (Mammachi, Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko, Rahel and Estha) also navigate between these two extremes—from traditional, cultural bias to individuality or *vice versa.* This journey of theirs begins with the lurking urge to seek for true self which eventually turns into disillusionment and brings greater turmoil in their life. They are driven by the emotional compulsions which make them to transgress the *'Edges, Borders, Boundaries, Brinks and Limits'.*

Arundhati Roy has beautifully woven the fabric of her story of three generations with the characters who are not types but the real men and women with virtues and vices. The novelist herself suggests that the story doesn't begin when Sophie Mol, the child character, the grand-daughter, arrives at Ayemenem but "...it could be argued that it actually began thousands of years ago.... That it really began in the days when the Love Laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much" (33). They are the laws....."That make grandmothers grandmothers, uncles uncles, mothers mothers, cousins cousins, jam jam, and jelly jelly" (31).

The characters in the novel are not the puppets in the hands of fate. They are the real men and women and also children in action, who are driven by something 'unmixable mix' within them. They don't seem to

stick up to the rules and laws that make 'jam jam and jelly jelly.' They walk out of their role models and make the life bitter all the more.

Pappachi, the head of the Ipe family is an entomologist. His life's greatest setback is not having had the moth that he has discovered, named after him. Even though he has been ill-humoured long before he discovers the moth, Pappachi's moth is held responsible for his black moods and sudden bouts of temper. He has always been a jealous man and hence he greatly resents the attention his wife, Mammachi is getting through her pickle factory. One more thing disturbs him that he is seventeen years older than his wife. The very realization of his being an old man and his wife being in her prime shocks him greatly.

As a result he beats her with flower vase every night. The beatings aren't new for Mammachi but this walk out, the transgression of the role model of a husband and a father begets insecurity and instability in the family that, in turn, lead to the failed marriages and ruined childhoods. It even enables Mammachi, his wife, in the coming years, to entertain Chacko's 'Man's Needs'. Mammachi who has once been a victim of male chauvinism and domestic violence appear to be a supporter of male chauvinism in the coming years only because Chacko, her son has saved her from the violence meted out on her by Pappachi.

"The day that Chacko prevented Pappachi from beating her (and Pappachi had murdered his chair instead), Mammachi packed her wifely luggage and committed it to Chacko's care. From then onwards he became the repository of all her womanly feelings. Her Man. Her only Love" (168). She is aware of her son's libertine relationships with women in the factory but it doesn't hurt her. She even gets a separate entrance built for Chacko's room for the objects of his 'Needs' and also secretly slips women money to keep them happy. But at the same time her daughter's illicit relations with an untouchable is simply unbearable for her.

> "Her tolerance of 'Men's Needs' as far as her son was concerned, became the fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter". (258)

In fact it is Mammachi who provides the passion to get Ammu absolutely devastated. Here, like Pappachi, Mammachi also steps out her motherly role.

Baby Kochamma, the lady villain in the novel also supports to bring about the pathetic end to Ammu's life. Indeed, "Mammachi provided the passion. Baby Kochamma the plan. Kochu Maria was their midget lieutenant" (258).

Baby Kochamma initiates and gives the desired end to the Ammu-Velutha story in such a way as if she is guarding the vanity of the family. But like her brother—Pappachi, she is no less hypocrite. This is the tag

that can easily be attached to most of the characters in the novel. But Arundhati Roy sees differently. To her they are all transgressors. Baby Kochamma is one of them.

She falls for a handsome young Irish Monk, Father Mulligan who is the weekly visitor to Ayemenem house as a part of his study of Hindu scriptures. She is eighteen then. "Of the two men, only one recognized the sensual excitement that rose like a tide in the slender girl who hovered around the table long after lunch had been cleared away" (23). Needless to say that the man is Father Mulligan. At first she tries to seduce Father Mulligan with weekly exhibitions of 'staged charity'.

"Every Thursday morning, just when Father Mulligan was due to arrive, Baby Kochamma force-bathed a poor village child at the well with hard red soap that hurt its protruding ribs" (23). She often puts Father Mulligan her bogus biblical doubts.

"Every Thursday, undaunted by the merciless midday sun, they would stand there by the well. The young girl and the intrepid Jesuit, both quaking with unchristian passion. Using the Bible as a ruse to be with each other" (24).

But a whole year of Thursdays goes by unfructified and Father Mulligan returns to Madras leaving Baby Kochamma's aching heart behind. As charity has not produced any desired results, she invests all her hope in faith. She even defies her father's wishes and becomes a Roman Catholic. She gets an entry into a convent in Madras as a trainee novice just to avail a legitimate occasion to be with Father Mulligan. But soon she realizes the futility of this endeavour, as the Senior Sisters monopolize the priests and bishops with biblical doubts more sophisticatedly than hers. It makes her more restless and unhappy in the convent. It leaves a bad pathological and mental effect on her. Eventually she is withdrawn from the convent. And since she cannot have a husband, Pappachi finds no harm to educate her further. She takes two years Diploma in Ornamental Gardening and to keep her from brooding her father gives her charge of the front garden of the Ayemenem house.

But Father Mulligan is not out of her mind. Nay she is more in love with him than ever. She is hurt when Father Mulligan, after years of contemplation of Hindu scripture, changes his faith.

"She was offended by the fact that he had actually, eventually, renounced his vows, but not for her" (298). Yet she keeps his memories even after his death and continues to love him. Here we find the Love Laws broken. Her fierce and bitter garden of the Ayemenem house is nothing but an emblem of the frustration of her love. This is the failure that leads her to conspire against Ammu and thus eventually brings about the catastrophe.

It doesn't mean that Ammu, the central character in the novel, is innocent. But she is more sinned than sinning. Ammu's earlier life, her childhood is overshadowed by Pappachi's domestic violence. Many a time she too has been a victim of this bully. She is trapped in "...the clutches of her ill-tempered father and bitter, long-suffering mother" (30).

After she finishes the schooling there is nothing to do in Ayemenem except to wait for the marriage proposals. But no proposal comes her way as her father does not have enough money to raise dowry for her. Thus unnoticed and desperate, Ammu dreams all the day of escaping from Ayemenem. Eventually she gets a chance and escapes and marries a man of her choice. But the man proves to be inappropriate for her as he wishes to trade his own wife—Ammu to secure his job. His boss proposes that he should go away for a while and Ammu be sent to his bunglow to be 'looked after'. There is a fight between Ammu and her husband. He apologizes later. But this becomes a pattern.

"Drunken violence followed by post-drunken badgering" (42).

By then she has twins. And when his bouts of violence begin to include the children she leaves him and returns to Ayemenem with her children, unwelcomed. The marriage fails.

Richard Curle rightly remarks—"Marriage is in women's blood."[1] So obviously it brings a complete void in their life when it is failed. Most of the Indian writings in English revolve around such distorted marriages which give birth either to a pathetic loveless life ahead or extramarital relations that also, in turn, end with disillusionment and bitter life all the more. Ammu in *The God of Small Things* is no exception. Her days in Ayemenem are blank. Though she concentrates on the upbringing of her children, she is restless from within. The suppressed feelings sometimes find a way like volcanic eruptions when she listens to the songs that she loves on the radio.

> "...something stirred inside her. A liquid ache spread under her skin, and she walked out of the world like a witch, to a better, happier place" (44). The days like these are really vibrant. On such days there is something restless and untamed about her. It sounds as if she has temporarily set aside the morality of motherhood and divorcee hood. "Even her walk changed from a safe mother-walk to another wilder sort of walk" (44).

The novelist suggests that there is something unsaid, unexpressed in her that makes her restless. "What was it that gave Ammu this Unsafe Edge? This air of unpredictability? It was what she had battling inside her. An unmixable mix" (44).

Rechard Curle has rightly observed that,".....women need men just as much as men need women."[2] Ammu is also a manless woman. She also has 'magic secrets' in her eyes. This unmixable mix, the unpredictability or the 'Unsafe Edge'—this uncontrollable, unsatiated love or passion in her completely changes 'the infinite tenderness of motherhood' into 'the reckless rage of a suicide bomber'. This means that a woman like Ammu doesn't always and necessarily behave in response to only the social, traditional and cultural codes. But there is also something in her that is purely personal and private—some inner private compulsions that affect her code of conduct.

"It was this that grew inside her, and eventually led her to love by night the man her children loved by day" (44). Thus the lost ship—Ammu finally finds the harbor—Velutha, the untouchable. Again "the love laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much", are broken and bring about the pathetic end to the lives of Ammu and Velutha, and also ruin the childhood of Rahel and Estha.

Rahel and Estha are the third generation. As Pappachi's domestic violence overshadows Ammu's life and makes her to revolt against the 'Love Laws' so does Ammu's perverted life bring a pall of gloom over the life of Rahel. She is expelled from schools one after the other for her ill behaviour. Firstly, for decorating the cowdung with flowers, secondly, for colliding with her seniors to know 'whether breasts hurt'. And finally for setting fire to her Housemistress' false hair bun. In college also she spends eight years without finishing the five-year undergraduate course. Her disinterest in everything and 'almost fierce lack of ambition', make her friends leave her alone. She is not invited to their nice homes or noisy parties.

Then during the days she is at School of Architecture she meets with Larry McCaslin. They get married.

"Rahel drifted into marriage like a passenger drifts towards an unoccupied chair in an airport lounge" (18). But their marriage also turns out to be a failure. Her husband is exasperated and offended by her eyes when they make love. Her blank looks seem as though they belong to someone else. But Larry can't understand, ".....that the emptiness in one twin was only a version of the quietness in the other" (20). Eventually they are divorced. During the time Estha is re-Returned to Ayemenem house.

Estha also is not an exception. He is molested by the orange drink man in his very childhood and carries the fear all along his life. Sophie Mol's sudden death also makes him dumb and "a quiet bubble floating on a sea of noise".

Thus deprived of the right upbringing and an uncertain atmosphere around, as in their very childhood, "....the unthinkable became thinkable and the impossible really happened" (31). This goes on and on, till they reach to the age of their mother—"Not old. Not young. But a viable dieable age" (3).

Now there is nothing for them left to share, but tears only. 'Quietness and Emptiness' fit together, lie together—a man and a woman. "...what they shared that night was not happiness, but hideous grief...once again they broke the Love Laws. That lay down who should be loved. And how. And how much" (328).

Not alone Ammu, Rahel and Estha break the love laws, but there are other characters also who violate the code of conduct.

"They all broke the rules. They all crossed into forbidden territory. They all tampered with the laws...." (31)

The police inspector Thomas Mathew is also a transgressor. He has also become unknowingly or half knowingly, the part of the conspiracy Baby Kochamma plans against Ammu. He doesn't work out the case properly as he expected to. When Ammu reaches the police station and wants to make a statement, he refuses saying that the Kottayam Police don't take statements from *'Veshyas'* and behaves with her in such a manner as if she is a whore, having illegitimate children.

"...he tapped her breasts with his baton. Gently. *Tap, tap.* As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket" (8). And ironically there is a red and blue board hanging behind him that says:

"**P**oliteness

Obedience

Loyalty

Intelligence

Courtesy

Efficiency." (8)

Another offender in the novel is the Orangedrink Lemondrink man who makes Estha to quench his unnatural lust. The event shocks Estha so terribly that he feels insecure even at home because the man has remarked:

"I know where your factory is. Paradise Pickles, isn't it?" (109). The fear of the man holds Estha's heart completely and dwells there for the rest of life.

Although Arundhati Roy ends her novel with a prospect of carnal bliss which Ammu and Velutha seek and that continues to thirteen more nights:

"She turned to say it once again: *'Naaley'*. Tomorrow" (340), the story ends with History's toll, that ruins the childhood of the twins and destructs the life of a young man and a young woman who break the laws—

'.....who should be loved and how. And how much'."

Notes

1. Curle, Richard, *Women—An Analytical Study*, Watts and Co. Limited: London, 1947: 37.
2. *Ibid.*, 39.

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6

Aspects of Environmental Writing in Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra*

Dr. S. Chitra

Abstract

India's perennial sources, the supposed community water bodies and sacred rivers, associated with innumerable beliefs, symbolize the immortal spirit of God in man. According to Hindu mythology, every river has a divine element as its source, enclosed in the forms of story and poem. For generations, such stories educated people to respect water as the true elixir of life. Even the topography of the land with its villages and temples located on the riverbank reflect the mutual co-existence of different worlds: the natural physical world, the animal world and the world of environment with the human society aiming at spiritual progress. This constant reverberation between man and nature has been luminously captured by Gita Mehta in her novel, *A River Sutra* (1993). Set on the banks of India's one of the holy rivers Narmada, the unnamed narrator discovers the real meaning of life against the threatening sanctity of the river. The goal of this paper is to uncover certain aspects of environmental writing under eco-criticism by juxtaposing the elements of nature with culture, as they often overlap as twinned process. This new critical category is concerned with the representation of nature in literature in different dimensions. Of the many existing perceptions, the prime focus of this paper would be on two levels: first, nature as a physical setting in the plot and then the consistency of values expressed in the work with the ecological wisdom.

Keywords: Ecology, Holy river Narmada, Religious beliefs, Power of love, Cultural values, Spiritual journey.

Indian English fiction has widened its scope to talk about the consciousness of environment in literature through the literary theory termed 'Ecocriticism'. This term was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (Shikha, K., 2011 1). Particular interest in the study of nature writing and reading literary texts with a focus on 'green' issue gained prominence through the 1980s and by the early 90s. Accordingly, Ecocriticism is defined as "the study of relation between literature and physical environment" by Cheryll Glotfetley and Fromm (David, M., 2007 xviii) in the *Ecocriticism Reader*. This shared relation between nature and man is so old that it is part of every literature and cultures of the world. As a literary theory, the all-inclusive term 'environment' describes the natural and the human world. In this context, Dr. Mark's statement throws further insight: "I use the term 'environmental writing' more than 'natural writing' because I am interested in writers concerned with natural as well as cultural experience" (Newsletter 8 3). This view is based on the premise that all human culture resides in the natural world and our very existence is a part of this process. Therefore, all our action toward the natural world is eventually an action toward oneself and toward one's culture. And according to Dr. Abha Pandey in the paper titled, "Eco-consciousness in Indian English Poetry", Ecocriticism helps the human beings have a broader view of nature. It urges humans to have a biocentric view despite their apparently incorrigible anthropocentrism due to their selfish nature (Academia 2015). Based on these perceptions, the paper attempts to interpret nature-man relationship Eco critically in terms of culture as represented in Mehta's *A River Sutra*.

In India, a land of diverse cultures, the Hindu belief system strengthens the spiritual aspects of man through river pilgrimages, an element of nature. Sharma, B.S. in the article titled "Mapping culture through *A River Sutra*: Tribal myths, dialogism, and meta-narratives in Post-colonial fiction" states that, "*A River Sutra* is a series of interlocking stories, spread across many centuries, reflecting the depth and complexity of India's spirituality." (Feb. 2012 17). Gita Mehta's third book, *A River Sutra* (1993), set on the banks of the holy river Narmada, interpret the Indian culture by means of different stories. The title of the novel stands for two things by which the multiple narratives are bound together: the Narmada River and a 'sutra', which literally means a 'thread or string' that holds the stories together. The stories are connected using the river Narmada as the 'sutra' or the link. True to this meaning, almost all the characters in the story converge on the banks of the river Narmada either for renunciation or tranquillity and share the motifs of love and desire. In similar sense, Sharm opines, "The seamless flow of the narrative is like the flow of the

river goddess Narmada" (UJEGS, Feb. 2012 17). Moreover, the river itself is entangled in the threads of mythology, anthropology, archaeology, astrology and scholarly research. The framework of the novel, inspired by Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, combines pilgrimage with storytelling in which the lives of different characters, central to each of the stories, meet at a common destination that is on the banks of the Narmada River in search of life's meaning. Sharm justifies this aspect by saying, "The elements of nature have been frequently elaborated by the oral tradition of storytelling, the Puranic and Vedic texts" (UJEGS, Feb. 2012 17)

The narrator, a retired bureaucrat, takes up a humble position as manager of a Government rest house situated on the Narmada River bank. Without any pressing family commitment, this widower withdraws from worldly life to experience the stage of Vanaprastha. Ironically he learns more about human life and its mysteries during his seclusion than he thought he did in his active in-service life. Professor Shankar, the Archaeologist turned Naga Baba to pursue research on the river, points out to the narrator: "You have chosen the wrong place to flee the world, my friend. Too many lives converge on these banks" (Mehta, 1993 268). Moreover, the location of the rest house and the bungalow's proximity to the Narmada River was its particular attraction for the un-named narrator. Thus the river became an object of his reflection to turn inward, spiritually as well as psychologically.

The physical description of the river spanning in its length and breadth denotes the fertility of the land and its life-support system with a feminine beauty attached to it. The words of the narrator picturises the lush green landscape and its vegetation: "On the riverbank towering bamboo thickets and trees overgrown with wild jasmine and lantana creepers cover the hillsides, suspending the bungalow in jungle so dense... crossed only by bounding monkeys, leaping black buck, meandering wild boar and sturdy tribal women from the nearby village of Vano" (Mehta, 1993 3-6). Following the description of its locale, the atmosphere which pervades the novel to unite all the narratives in its fold is depicted in the following lines: "Streaks of pale light send clouds of noisy birds into the sky, evoking crowds of pilgrims swarming through Amarkantak's temples for the morning worship" (Mehta, 1993 5). The scenic display recurs and introduces the readers to "the river's heartbeat pulsing under the ground" (Mehta, 1993 5) as well as in the human heart echoing India's core cultural values and religious beliefs. We find ascetics performing Narmada pilgrimage by walking toward the river's source at Amarkantak that covers about eight hundred kilometres taking nearly two years to complete. The pilgrimage is a test on man's capacity for endurance, as any other spiritual journey, and in its fruition the pilgrimage

links mankind with the cosmic energy. The description of the river at dawn and dusk implies human activity and the closer interaction between nature and human life. At twilight, the water at Mahadeo temple complex "flickers with tiny lamps floated for the evening devotions" (Mehta, 1993 4). In the perception of Indian culture, constructing places of worship such as temples, big and small, on the river bank, is done with a forethought to intertwine the sense of ecology and spirituality with man's life which acts as one of the basic tenets of Hindu Dharma.

The female principle of the river includes the varied myths associated with its nomenclature. For instance, the stone image of the Vano village deity resembles the mythical legend of a mysterious race of half-human, half-serpent, with the bust of a female and the torso of a coiled snake. The underlying belief was that the Vano tribal community, the progeny of the pre-Aryan Nagas, who worshipped the Naga, once ruled a snake kingdom until they were defeated by the Aryans. Henceforth, the tribe strongly believed that they were saved from annihilation by a divine personification of the Narmada River. As a result, they conferred the river with the gift of annulling the effects of snake bite and their invocation is recited thus:

> Salutation in the morning and at night o thee, O Narmada!
>
> Defend me from the serpent's poison. (Mehta, 1993 6)

The power of their belief is made evident in one of the stories about the life of a young tea-estate executive, Nitin Bose. Believed to be possessed by the magic spell of a tribal girl, Rima, Nitin Bose has been advised by the tribal priest to worship the goddess at any shrine overlooking the river Narmada. He has been said, "Only that river has been given the power to cure him" (Mehta, 1993 136). It is a common belief with which the pilgrims pray to the river to save them from the serpent's venom. The meaning is that "the serpent in question is desire. Its venom is the harm a man does when he is ignoring the power of desire" (Mehta, 1993 143). Nitin Bose became a victim of Kama's sugarcane bow strung with honey bees resulting in his dream-like relationship with the tribal girl, Rima. Realizing her identity as a tealeaf-picker, he abandons her. Rima turns vengeful and seeks the help of the Snake goddess, as she is a woman from the Naga world, to possess the lover. Now, in order to weaken the spell of possession, Nitin has been directed by a tribal priest to the earlier mentioned Vano village men and their tribal worship of that Desire. Under their guidance, he performs certain rituals and finally immerses the idol with salutations to the river. The ceremony signifies that his sins are drowned in Narmada and he is liberated from the power of desire, which is "acknowledged to be invincible" and described as "the firstborn seed of the mind" (Mehta, 1993 98). The belief works, in the sense, Nitin Bose has imagined his sickness and now he has imagined

his cure, who on his return, pens an essay on tribal practices, a sign of his recovery.

Reading Nitin Bose's diary, the narrator feels that, "the legends of the Narmada merged with Nitin Bose's story" (Mehta, 1993 139). In the context of the Narmada river, born of Shiva's asceticism, it took the form of a beautiful woman, a seductress. "It is said that Shiva, Creator and Destroyer of Worlds, was in an ascetic trance so strenuous that rivulets of perspiration began flowing from his body down the hills. The stream took on the form of a woman—the most dangerous of her kind" (Mehta, 1993 8). Even the ascetics are tempted by her beauty that they could not escape from desire and lust. The narrator recalls how Kama was reduced to ashes by the Ascetic's third eye, "even as he himself was being consumed by desire" (Mehta, 1993 97). In order to free themselves from such a bondage, the ascetic pilgrims chant:

'Shiva-o-ham, Shiva-o-ham,

I that am Shiva, Shiva am I.' (Mehta, 1993 5).

This oneness with Shiva is captured in the Minstrel's story. Naga Baba saves a girl child from a brothel by demanding her as his gift on the night of Shiva and named her Uma meaning 'peace in the night'. He teaches her the songs of Narmada who later becomes a 'river minstrel' singing in praise of Narmada river in temples. Through her verse, a form of oral tradition, we come to know the meaning of its name and the mythical history of the river:

'But Shiva called you

Delight

And laughing

Named you Narmada.' (Mehta, 1993 273)

The river Narmada, was born of Shiva's penance and was named by laughter. She is considered to be the sanctuary of salvation for mankind who can dissolve the fear of time. Further, Shankaracharya's invocation to the Narmada reflects the idea of co-existence of the natural physical world, the animal world and the world of environment experiencing peace and contentment. It is recited thus:

'Turtles and river dolphins find refuge in your waters

Alighting herons play upon your tranquil surface

Fish and crocodiles are gathered in your embrace.

O holy Narmada.' (Mehta, 1993 233)

Shankaracharya, the great reformer of Hinduism in the 8th century wrote 'Narmadashtaka' to pray to the goddess Narmada to relieve common man from its floods (as cited in UJEGS, Fb. 2012 25).

Some of the beliefs associated with the river Narmada in particular and in general about the holy rivers in India are: The holiness of the river has the spiritual power to liberate man from series of births to attain salvation. The presence of water, one of the five natural elements, signifies divine grace with which the world is blessed. The property of water is to cleanse the impurities of the earth and of the human soul, making it holy. Innumerable such arguments and tales circulate around this astonishing river, says Dr. Mitra, who runs a small hospital in the nearby town Rudra. Also considered to be a scholar on the Narmada, Dr. Mitra expands on the excesses of the devout feelings attached to the river. He says that even the Greeks and the Alexandrines had heard about the holiness of the river and the Alexandrine geographer, Ptolemy has written about Narmada. Moreover, the religious suicides at Amarkantak are not treated as an offence as it is considered spiritual to gain release from the cycle of birth and rebirth. Evidence for this belief lies in one of the stories. In the Courtesan' story, the daughter was abducted by the bandit Rahul Singh. Upon his death, the girl carrying the tag as a bandit's wife, is left with no choice but to commit suicide in the river Narmada for which her mother is happy, "her daughter died in the Narmada because she would be purified of all her sins" (Mehta, 1993 190). In the opinion of A. Ramesh Babu and J. Sudhakar Rao, the narratives use Narmada River as the abstergent refuge for corrupted and distraught people and thus the characters purify their body and soul by drowning in the river (Language in India, Feb. 2012 535).

Apart from the beliefs, the river is given female image and spiritual significance. The river minstrel's song celebrates the varied aspects of the river including its antiquity. A sample song is given here as an illustration:

'From Shiva's penance you became water.
From water you became a woman
So beautiful that gods and ascetics
Their loins hard with desire
Abandoned their contemplations
To pursue you.'
'You were present at the Creation
By Shiva's command you alone will remain
At the Destruction.' (Mehta, 1993 274, 277).

The river, described as a woman with beautiful hips, is an evoker of Narma, lust and according to Dr. Mithra, 'narmada' means whore in Sanskrit (Mehta, 1993 150). To get rid of desire, one has to experience it. This universal truth is pronounced as: "...that the Ascetic too must feel

Desire for without Desire the play of the worlds would cease" (Mehta, 1993 97). In that sense, the ascetics are drawn by the lustful desire provoked by the womanly river only to get rid of it in the same river. Thus the river is twice-born like a Brahaman. As per the vedic principle of 'dvujan', a Brahman is reborn during the upanayana ceremony. Similarly, Narmada is twice-born: "Once from penance, Once from love" (Mehta, 1993 275). As a result, the river carries the twin characteristics of life: 'Evoker of lust' and 'Soother of Desires', a two-in-one state. This truth is characterized in the poor child, born out of human love turned to Uma, the river minstrel, in the hands of Naga Baba's penance. According to Sharm, in the novel's narrative, the river minstrel, Uma sings of Narmada as twice-born which is true for herself as well. To quote, "Uma, like Narmada has two births" (UJEGS, Feb. 2012 26).

The novel perceives love as an offspring of nature with casual reference to Kama, the mythical God of Love. Once, when the narrator was returning from his usual morning walk after visiting Tariq Mia—the old mullah of the valley—he was greeted by the Vano village women collecting fuel in the undergrowth with this provocative remark: "It must be the season. Spring rouses even old tigers from their rest...The mango trees are in bloom" (Mehta, 1993 92). Such a literary allusion to spring season as a renewal of fresh life and amorous feeling indeed brings 'a mood of longing in the jungle' expressed in natural terms thus: "Small flowers foamed over the leaves of the mango trees, the wind carried the scent of lemon blossoms and sandalwood to my nostrils" (Mehta, 1993 93). Then the mythical reference is drawn by comparing the animal and the human world: "The call of the koil bird, that strange imitation of a woman's cry at the moment of sexual fulfilment, hung suspended in the air, and I felt mythology at any moment become reality" (Mehta, 1993 93). It shows that the perfect combination of spring and the five deadly arrows from Kama's sugarcane bow can work wonders. The crucial moment, dangerous of all, can perform the magic of delight and allurement exciting mad desires in human. Such vivid physical descriptions of nature and depth of mythical details in relation to human sensibilities render the novel its exquisite beauty about Nature and human nature. The reference hints at the subtle truth that the world of nature be the second nature to mankind for mutual co-existence.

Music, an artistic form of nature finds expression in the following stories: The Teacher's Story, The Courtesan's story and the Musician's story. Hindu mythology perceives music as the food of love, nourishment for the soul, a medium to attain salvation and a form of divinity itself, because "There was no art until Shiva danced the Creation," giving birth to melody (Mehta, 1993 205). On the other hand, in the Islamic mysticism,

the songs and poems of the great Sufi mystics gave birth to Quawwali music. In the concert of the finest Quawwali musicians that Master Mohan, the music teacher encountered Imrat, the blind child prodigy, singing in pure tone the praise of God, "that could only be imagined but never realized by the human voice" (Mehta, 1993 61). Against his family's contempt and cruelty, Master Mohan became the guardian of the child, whom he considered 'something rare' and felt, "as if his own life until now had only been a purification to ready him for the task of tending this voice for the world" (Mehta, 1993 68). Akin to the purpose of Narmada river pilgrimage, an endurance test, the music practice of Imrat in the gardens of the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta, early in the morning, gave the power of endurance not only to Master Mohan but also to the downtrodden, "to confront the indignities of their lives for another day." Indeed, the songs of the wandering poets and mystics such as Kabir, Mirabai, Khusrau, Tulsidas, Chisti and Chandidas, "had made India's soul visible to herself" (Mehta, 1993 73), carrying in it the great knowledge of the world. It is needless to say sublime devotional music and its ecstasy pulsates through the rich diversity of Indian culture.

In addition to river/water, music has the power to refine one's sensibilities. Both these elements of nature are inseparable aspects of the universe rendering spiritual meaning to human existence. For instance, one can hear the reverberation of 'Om' sound in the flowing rivers; Omkaram, the origin of all sounds and life itself. One of the many narratives, The Musician's Story, discusses the meaning of 'Om', a three and a half sound in one note, chanted thrice during meditation and pilgrimages. It is a common sight in India to see" the pilgrims standing in waist deep water, cupping water in their hands then letting it fall in a stream through their fingers as they chanted, "Om. Om. Om" (Mehta, 1993 196). It signifies the three worlds, the three fires and the three gods. The mystic number three governs the principle of the universe: Creation, Protection and Destruction, fulfilled by Brahma, Vishu and Shiva respectively. The sound 'Om' is also created by three separate actions of our body such as the opening of the lips, release of breath and closing of lips. Again this principle appears in the language study to teach the articulation of sounds. The novelist further dissects the meaning of the sound: the first sound of Om stand for the manifest world, waking consciousness and gross experience; the second sound of Om connote the unmanifest world, dreaming consciousness and subtle experience; the third sound of Om represent the nonmanifest world, dreamless sleep and potential experience; lastly, the half-syllable Om is silence of the unmanifest world, the ultimate goal and an incomparable target. This particular religious derivation became the source for psychology, a branch of science.

Based on the meanings rendered to the sound Om, in his model of human psyche, Freud divided the psyche into three parts: the id, ego and superego.

Further, the novelist describes how the seven notes of classical music had its origin in nature. In general, a child realizes the sweetness of melody by listening to sounds, especially the singing of birds: "the birds' songs are a spontaneous response to the beauty of the world. That is truly music" (Mehta, 1993 203). It is insensible to think that only humans respond to beauty. Animals are more sensitive to nature than humans. For instance, the birds sing at dawn and at sunset "because of the changing light" (Mehta, 1993 203). In the story, the father, a musician himself and an expert player of veena—the first instrument of music and its music, the expression of Shiva's love—starts his musical lessons to his daughter by taking her to jungle and making her listen the melodies of nature. The inherent music in nature is vividly explained: the strutting of the peacock is Sa, the panic of a lost calf—re, the destructive antics of a goat—ga, the sweeping flight of the heron—Ma, the song of the nightingale at night—Pa, the neighing of a horse—Dha and an elephant's trumpet sound—ni. The relation between nature and music unfolds beautifully in the story conforming Wordsworth's principle, "Nature is the best teacher." Thus the first lesson in music doesn't take place in the confined rooms or with the help of musical instruments but in the open fields at Mother Nature's lap.

One another proof for India's cultural richness and adornment of nature, lies in the small state of Shahbag, described in The Courtesan's Story. Shahbag means 'garden of the emperor' named from Emperor Jehangir's pleasure at the field of flowers growing on the river bank of Narmada, stretching along twelve miles as wide as an ocean (162). The courtesan describes the way the Nawab himself honoured the river's holiness by showering blossoms on its waters with these salutations: "Bathing in the waters of the Jamuna purifies a man in seven days, in the waters of the Saraswati in three, in the waters of the Ganges in one, but the Narmada purifies with a single sight of her waters. Salutations to thee, O Narmada" (Mehta, 1993 163). Irrespective of religious faith, the ancestors of India paid their esteemed reverence to natural elements like rivers, knowing well the principle, existence lies in co-existence. Even the concept of 'courtesan' proclaims the cherished values of art and life. The courtesan women were "renowned not just for their beauty but for their learning" (Mehta, 1993 164), holding mastery over sixty four arts described by Vatsayana in his *Kama Sutra*. The essence of art is another accomplishment that the novel defines in itself for the term 'Sutra'.

Contrary to co-existence, man's nature goes against Nature and the romantic description of the courtesan's life in Shahbag changes drastically against the emerging stark realities of modernity. The splendid river gardens stretching at length with flower beds were replaced with factories, the gracious old buildings and boulevards of architectural beauty were pulled down and replace by concrete boxes. Similarly, the "woods that once ringed the city have been cut down for the shanty-towns of labour colonies." These subliminal changes were brought by men, "who believe every human being has a price, and a full purse is power" (Mehta, 1993 167). With this rapid transition, the once-cherished values were ignored for money and power; the transitory, impermanent objects ruled the lives of men in the name of so-called progress.

Our ancestors, even during the times when water-bodies were abundant, conveyed the message that water is the perennial source of life, without which, all beings would perish. Until the generation of our grandparents, water-bodies were treated with utmost respect and concern that they were given the status of deity. By worshipping rivers, humanity was instructed to live in mutual co-existence and not at the cost of nature. The far-sightedness of our forefathers is seen in choosing religion and its associated beliefs as the suitable medium to communicate the importance of nature to mankind for the universal well-being. They assigned spiritual values to nature so that the common mass can practice the reality to exist in peace and prosperity. That's the reason, the leap and bound with which the river flows is compared to a 'dancing deer'—Reva, symbolising happiness, because fulfilment in nature can secure happiness for all.

Thus Gita Mehta uses the river Narmada "to capture multi-textured contemporary India with diverse voices, myths, symbols, rituals, beliefs, behaviour and customs, empowering the inherited cultural forms" (UJEGS, Feb. 2012 26). In fact, the tales are bonded through one sutra, the river Narmada to highlight the forgotten, ancient tradition and culture. Therefore, almost all the stories culminate in its characters finding solace and refuge in the arms of goddess Narmada. The reason for such faith becomes clear when the the minstrel sings:

'You remove the stain of evil.

You release the wheel of suffering.

You lift the burdens of the world,

O holy Narmada.' (Mehta, 1993 278)

To conclude with the words of Ramamoorthi: "*A River Sutra* is an attempt to subversiveness to present the river as an eternal source of the flow of life" (1999 53).

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7

Food, Caste and Dalitness: The Socio-politics of Joothan in Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*

Naganna T.

Food is an important cultural narrative marker, mode and medium of social organization. Food and its constitutive discourses, i.e., myths, folklores and narratives that have evolved around it, embedded and unravel complex socio-cultural and political formations. Not only does food provide a framework for interrogating social justice, it also reveals the deepest levels of economic structures conniving to perpetually victimize whole people. Within this socio-ideological grid, food through its varied culinary practices, availability and choices of communities become the foremost metaphors, medium and means for regaining space, power, voice and dignity within the dominant discourse or as an alternative to it. The narratives and lived practices around food, in other words, emerge as important functions and tools of access and entitlement and help articulate the attendant discursive existential contestations around food. This is especially true of Dalit life narratives.

The very title of *Joothan* shows that it is an exploration of a voice, and a self that has food at the centre of critical enquiry. In his engagement with food he engages with very basic questions that are fundamental to human existence and central to the ethics of survival, i.e., how is food complicit with the system of oppression? How do hegemonies evolve and solidify and through food? How food as survival is implicated in the issues of ethics and morality.

Within the narrative, ethnography and cultural context of novel food is as an identity marker that is determined through the epistemologies of the similarities and diffeence. Valmiki focuses on the caste relations of his

village how one is identified or differentiated though patterns and practice of food consumption, eating behaviour, food preferences and taboos. The world 'Joothan' incorporates within the simultaneous notion of food, that is, leftovers and discarded scrap. It means something not pure. The two concepts implicit in the semantics of Joothan are surplus of food, the wretchedness of want and the perpetual lack or scarcity of food. The food surplus translates into a wasteful superfluity in the upper caste food culture and generates what Valmiki eponymously alludes to as joothan. This superfluity is symptomatic of the presence of more than 'enough' good at one social extreme but also hints at the unsustainable gluttonous nature of those eaters who pile up the defile more than they can consume. The use of the term gluttonous would have appeared as superfluous or excaggeration had Valmiki not silhouetted it against the backgound of lower caste deprivation and impoverishment caused by perpetual want and food scarcity. Though such deconstructive ploys the author tacitly underlines the fact that when 'consumption patterns' get 'distorted' they fail to strengthen human capacities and capabilities and endanger human well-being. They very title of his semiautobiographical text doconstructs the socially irresponsible, oppressive and depriving underbelly of food-caste politics.

In this novel Omprakash Valmiki narrates an incident throwing liht on the relationship between an upper caste teacher and a Dalit student.

He writies:

> One-day headmaster Kaliram called me in his room and asked: "Abey, what is your name?"
>
> "Omprakash", I ansered slowly and fearfully.
>
> "Chuhre Ka?" Head master threw his second question at me.
>
> "Ji"
>
> "All right... See that teak tree there? Go. Climb on that tree. Break some twigs and make a broom. And sweep the whole school clean as a mirror. It is, after all your family occupation". (Valmiki 4)

Caste is such an important marker that teachers and the management deliberately connive to prevent a low caste student (Valmiki) from studying and changing his life (65). There is tension between meritocracy and Valmiki's experiences as a Dalit student. The pain suffered due to humiliation, exclusion and physical violence are voiced in the autobiography but get ignored in public discourses. The protagonist faces a clash between the negative identities imposed on him from the outside (by the upper caste) and his positively self ascribed identity. While for the Dalit writiers and readers it's a unifying factor, for the non-Dalits this exposure means a hope for change.

There is another side to this fight for a 'positive' identity and recognition in society. In *Joothan* Valmiki has successfully narrated his painful ordeals but he glosses over the intercaste conflict among the Chamar and Bhangi Dalits. One can conclude from this that he is re-emphasizing the nattative agenda of the Dalit autobiography as being part of a larger movement of Dalit assertion. Generally referring to or focusing on divisions within the Dalit community is seen as counter-productive to larger interests. Hence we find most writers silent over this issue and the same is true of the writer of *Joothan*.

This painstaking recollection and cataloguing of one's physical, social and psychological milieu abounds in the unfolds through an evocatively sensuous conjuring up of smells, tastes, and touch. This tactile sense felicity helps Valmiki record the squalour and stench of the Dalit existential reality and reclaim their socio-historical and literary spaces.

The caste-food equation controls, informs and reflects the 'Dalit-savarna' socio-spatial and relational dynamics of/in *Joothan*. It is around this equation that Dalit identity and consciousness gets crystallized and hierarchically marked. But this marking, as the narrative tenor of *Joothan* makes it abundantly clear, is nevertheless, culturally ambivalent.

That is how, Valmiki in pain and anger and from deep within his heart emerges the voice of protest and he says:

> "I have not been able to forget these bitter memories. They flash in my mind like lightning every now and then. Why is it a crime to ask for the price of one's labour? Those who keep singing the glories of democracy use the government machinery to quell the blood flowing in our veins. As though we are not citizens of this country. The weak and the helpless have been suppressed for thousands of years, just in this manner. There is no accounting of how many talents have been wiped out by deception and treachery." (39)

Throughout the novel we find the narrator, Omprakash burning with anger and this anger leads him to make several statements which highlight the underlying resistance in him. Thus he contests caste discrimination.

Even today the notion of caste system has not been changed even if the lower caste people got education. They were behaved worse than the beasts. They had no value in the society. An animal was worshipped in those days but person who belongs to the lower caste had no place in the society.

Fauza was shouting and swearing: "Abey Chuhre Ke..." just because he has learnt to read a litter he has gotten above himself. {Abey. Don't forget who you are" (57).

When Valmiki was ill-treated in the upper class society he began to curse himself being born into a Hindu family. Though "it must be recognized that there never has been a common Indian Culture, historically there have been three Indias, Brahmanic India, Buddhist India and Hindu India, each with its own culture...it must be recognized that the history of India before the Muslim invasions is the history of a mortal conflict between Bramanism and Buddhims" Valmiki asserts:

But something came to a boil inside me... "Neither am I a Hindu". If I were really a Hindu, would the Hindu hate me so much? Or discriminate against me? Or try to fill me up with caste inferiority over the smallest things? I also wondered why does one have to be a Hindu in order a good being... I have seen and suffered the cruelty of Hindus since childhood. Why are Hindus so cruel, so heartless against Dalits? (41).

Valmki met a girl named Savita. She invited him at her home for a cup of tea. He asked to Savita when he saw an SC candidate who was given a cup of tea in another pot. He enquired,

"you had given him tea in a different cup?"

"Yes, the SCs and the Muslims who come to our hosue, we keep their dishes separate", Savita replied evenly.

"Do you think discrimination is right?" I asked. She felt the sharp edge in my voice now.

"On...why, are you mad? How can we feed them in the same dishes?"

"Why not? In the hotel...in the mess, everyone eats together. What is wrong in eating together in your home as well?" I tried to reason with her.

Savita defended the discrimination of right and justified by tradition. Her arguments were infuriating me. However, I remained calm. According to her, SCs were uncultured. Dirty (57).

Valmiki questioned himself that what is Dalit? The answer can be explined as members of the scheduled castes and tribes, neo-Buddhists, the working people, the landless and poor presants, women and all those who are being exploited politically, economically and in the name of religion.

To reach before the conclusion it can be said that Valmiki suffered a lot in his lifetime. He had bad experience of the life. Therefore, that one of the most powerful moments of the text is Valmiki's mother's overturning of the basketful of joothan after she is humiliated by Sukhdev Singh Tyagi. Her act of defiance sows the seeds of rebellion in the child Valmiki. The *Joothan* is dedicated to her and Valmiki's father, both portrayed as heroic figures, which desired something better for their child and fought

for his safety and growth with tremendous courge. Valmiki's father's ambitions for his son are evident in the nickname, Munshiji, that he gives Valmiki rise on their shoulders to become the first high school passed suffered by them and other Dalits.

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8

Representation of Dalit in the Novel *Unotouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand

Hanumantaraya

Abstract

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the most highly regarded Indian novelists writing in English. His main concern has always been for the people in the lower status of Indian society, who have been continuously rejected by a high caste society since Vedas. This group had no right to articulate their sorrow or angers against the oppressors. Unique quality of his novel is humanism, and the novels have been translated into several languages and read worldwide. The novel *Untouchable* concerns with the inequalities in the society and inspired by a mission to eliminate or eradicate the evils of castism, hypocrisy and exploitation of the poor by the high caste society. Mulk Raj Anand tries to present a Dalit life through his writings such as novels. *Untouchable* novel deals with the story of a Dalit boy. This novel brings a life of Dalits and their sufferings from caste society.

Keywords: Untouchable, Oppressors, Inequality, Castism, Hypocrisy, Exploitation, etc.

Introduction

Mulk Raj Anand depicted a Dalit's life by creating the character Bakha, he wanted to show the youth's unique sensitivieness as against the people of the upper castes who thought merely touching him is degradation. In this novel Anand describes the character Bakha's helpless frustration, anxiety and agony. Anand's emphasis is on the condition of inhumanity forced by upper class in the society. The *Untouchable* novel deals with the event of a single day in the life of the low caste boy—

Bakha, that how untouchable/Dalit are not accepted in society and ill treated by people of other castes.

Meaning of the Word DALIT

The word Dalit literally means 'Oppressed', this word is used as synonym for 'Untouchable'. This word reflects to casteless section in India. Dalit has been called by different names in different places, for example—Dalits are called as Madiga, Vaddar whereas in Maharashtra they are called as Maharas. They have been called by different names in different places. Some are also called as Harijan which means 'Children of Good', they are also called as Broken People.

Etymologically, the word 'Dalit' comes from the Sanskrit word Dalit which means 'Down', 'Trodden', 'Suppressed', 'Crushed' or 'Broken into Pieces'. It was first used by Jyotiba Phule to whom we call the Champion of Backward Classes and other oppressed classes of Maharashtra in the 19th century. Mahatma Gandhi called the Dalits as Harijans, which mean the children of Hari.

Dalits are working as labourers, cleaning streets, latrines and nightsoil, therefore they have been considered as pollutants and forced to live far from mainstream society. Thus Dalit communities are banned from total participation in social Hindu life, and they are isolated from mainstream.

Representation of Dalit in the Novel *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand

In my presentation paper I have focused on the daily activity of a boy named as 'Bakha' who is representing Dalit community in the novel *Untouchable*. This boy works more curiously and laboriously by keeping the public latrines of the town clean. In this novel Anand expresses his sympathy towards the Dalits in India. He wrote this novel to awaken the conscience of the upper castes in India. Bakha, the lead character representing plight of the Dalits in Indian society, also shows how they have been treated by the upper class society.

The novel begins with a description of the town of Bulasha, the colony which belonged to the Dalits, and his place represents the Keri and plight of the Dalits areas in India. The author describes Bulasha like a mud walled houses, whose houses are clustered together in two rows, under the shadow of the town. The author presented Dalits colony which we can see present day like Keri. This colony indicates that the Dalits have isolated or segregated from the mainstream of society.

The protagonist Bakha is the central character of the novel. Bakha stands as the mirror of exploited, deprived and condemned Dalit boys in the society. He loves to wear English clothes and he imitates English soldiers, because they don't discriminate human beings on the basis of

their caste and creed. This shows a boy's sense of protest. His voice represents Dalits voice.

Mulk Raj Anand introduces Havaldar Charat Singh who belonged to upper caste famous hockey player. One day he remarks that "Oye Bakhya, you are transforming into a gentleman". His remarks shows the caste superiority. Havaldar asks him to take a gift of hockey stick from him, Bakha shows humble smile (Scene II).

Sohini is younger sister of Bakha. One day Sohini goes to fetch water from the well. Their she has to wait to get water from the well because they could not touch the well, until come someone of upper caste to give them water without touch. This incident is remarkable to know how Dalits have been treated by upper caste in India. In modern India we can see only few of such incidence in our society (scenelll).

One day Bakha enters bazaar, which reflects the true image of Indian market. There he purchases a pocket of red camp brand cigarettes, he pays one anna coin, the shopkeeper sprinkles water on the coin and around the shop to purify them. This is common situation to Dalits in some of our village. Will it ever be terminated? (SC IV). This only happens to Dalits. One day Bakha touches a high caste Hindu, he has been scolded like swine, dog, brute. These animals closely associates with pollute. These words signify the Dalit's place in the society, these words has been used by upper caste to whom we call educated and well cultured in our society.

In this novel Bakha raises voice and asks question to our society. Why do the Mohammedans and the Sahibs not discriminate? Why is Mohammedan or a Christian not polluted when a low caste touches them? These questions are not only asked by Bakha, he asked questions as representative of Dalits. He becomes voice of Dalits (SC V).

While working in the temple, Bakha decides to see god, while taking glimpses of images of God and Goddesses priest shouted "Polluted, polluted, polluted". The priest and all devotees shout at him. They asked to get off the temple, because he has polluted, this scene is noticeable and heart reading because it is the worst example of discrimination against human beings on the basis of caste. It is a matter of shame for Hindu clerics. It requires a great social and religious reform and self reform. In Pandit Kalinatha case that he tries to seduce Sohini, he becomes savage and brute and forgets that Sohini is like his daughter, but she fights against the Pandit to protect her modesty. This incident shows how Dalit woman have been treated by upper caste.

This scene shows how the priest treated low caste women. At the time Bakha also becomes disappointed, even through his blood is boiling for

revenge on Pandit. But he could not. Because he cannot trespass barriers forged by caste, culture. He fails to take revenge, his heart sinks and he cannot violate the convention. This culture shows that how Dalit has been controlled or tortured by upper caste society (SC VI).

Bakha wander from door to door to collect the bread, otherwise they will have to sleep without bread, empty stomach. He begged with his characteristic voice and demand. "Bread for the sweeper mother" that time a woman abuses on him, because he sat at her doorstep. She scolded harshly. He moves next door to collect bread. As he moves on, a woman throws bread to him. He fails to catch it. Soon he collects them from dump and dirty brick pavement, and then sets for home. He does not go to collect more food for they day. He is depressed, frustrated, humiliated and condemned and tortured. His suffering is outcome of thousands of years of exploitation of the lower caste Hindu by Brahmins.

These all scenes represent the Dalits' plight in the *Untouchable*, and down-trodden, who have been forced to live in filth squador. They have been denied the rights of living as human beings.

This novel belongs to pre-independence period of India. This novel helps us to know how Dalits have been treated by main stream society before independence but nowadays we cannot find those much of discrimination on the ground of caste and creed. But I am not saying it is eradicated from the country we can see a few incidents in our modrn India.

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9

A Study of *Gandhian Consciousness* in the Novels of R.K. Narayan

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As an assessment of the effect of development communication, as used in the political campaigns by Gandhiji, portrayed by the contemporary Indian English novelists.

One of the most popularly discussed and yet many-a-time controversial figure of Indian politics is Mahatma Gandhi. There is hardly any area in the pre or post-independence era that he had left untramplled for the sake of Indian development and independence. He is such a socio-political figure who is barely impossible for someone to forget or ignore. He has influenced every aspect of human consciousness and there is hardly any discipline that he has left uncommented. He is an immense source of writing himself and has influenced different disciplines and very many writers from different fields like history, politics, philosophy, literture, sociology and so on, have him as their central themes. While musing on different books on Gandhiji, especially the then Gandhian Indian English Literaure, one can easily sense that the then time was grossly occupied by a 'Gandhian Consciousness' socially, culturally and politically, at least in the period from 1918-1922 in the anti-colonial against the British.

The Gandhian consciousness was mirrored in the Gandhian revolution from 1920 to 1947 and K.R.S. Iyengar, the noted critic historian of Indian Writing in English, called it the period of "the Gandhian age". Another eminent critic, Professor M.K. Naik, considered it the period of "the Gandhian whirlwind" with an unprecedented awakening of "a distinctive national unity" in every walk of life. Gandhian consciousness became a style of living. It became identical with the movements for

Swadeshi, Khaddar, Charakha, Tiranga, Satygaraha, Swaraj, Satya, Ahimsa and protested against the anti-colonial rule with an awakening of a free and regenerated nation. Gandhian consciousness witnessed its scope with the invincible actions and became village-oriented, individual-oriented and anti-imperialistic by instinct.

R.K. Narayan who displayes Gandhian philosophy, is neither a politically committed novelist like Mulk Raj Anand nor a metaphysical philosopher novelist like Raja Rao, but he is "simply the novelists as a novelist" as William Walsh writes. Narayan is basically "a native talent natively nurtured" who represents the feeling "of India, even of South India" and "uses the English language much as we are used to wear dhotis manfactured in Lancashire." He is an exporter of ethos of South Indian Hindu middle class families in the background of Malgudi. Malgudi is not a place but an experience of soil and soul of India. It has built him "a devoted readership throughout the world from New York to Moscow" and he is regarded as "one of the most respected novelists at present writing in the British Commonwealth."

R.K. Narayan's Malgudi mirrors time and image of whole India. It is not microcosm but macrocosm which combines the old and the new, tradition and modernity, the mood of the novelist and that of the contemporary world. Therefore, William Walsh writes:

> "The Mysore of his personal life, the Malgudi of his novelist's life, becomes an intense and brilliant image of India itself. What happens in India happens in Malgudi and whatever happens in Malgudi happens everywhere."

Narayan's *Swamy and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Art* (1937), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955) and the *Vendor of Sweets* are set in the background of Malgudi. We can witness the change in defence of nationalism which is symbolic of Gandhian consciousness in one of his stories, Lawley Road. Malgudi expresses its concern of Gandhian influence by nationalizing the streets, parks of the country in honour of India's independence and that of sons of India. Lawley, was later re-named as 'Gandhi Nagar' and the council of characters in its extraordinary meeting decided:

> "...to nationalaize the names of all streets and parks. They made a start with the park of the market square. It used to be called the Corronation Park. Henceforth to be 'Hamara Hindustan Park'.... The town became unrecognizable with new names."

Gandhi's immeasurable personality of political vision inspired patriotism and anti-colonialism which spread like legends that "multiplied and permeated through the Indian consciousness" and meant "different

things to different groups of men—castes, class and ideologies." Gandhi's political movements raised many issues that attacked the British colonial educaitonal system which distorted and suppressed the real face of India. R.K. Narayan's *Swamy and Friends* (1935), *The Bachelor of Arts* (1937) and *The English Teacher* (1945) protest on common issues of educational system where Swaminathan, as a student, is victimized by the system; Chandran as a graduate, is a protestant against a system, Krishnan, as a teacher, is sufferer against the system. But their Gandhi-like protests are similar and noteworthy.

Swaminathan in *Swami and Friends* feels offended and sleepy in his scripture class of Albert Mission School where Hindu gods were an object of criticism and laughter. He doesn't tolerate the Christian missionary operating against Hinduism and loves to leave the school in protest. He tells the principal of Mission school in anger and protest, "I do not care for your dirty school." It is a Gandhi-like protest against British educational system in Indian rooted by the colonial empire. Mani and Swami listen to Gauri Shankar, a Gandhian in Khaddar who addresses, "We are slaves of slaves...English is no bigger than our Madras Presidency and is inhabited by a handful of white rogues and is thousands of miles away. Yet we pay in homage before the English men" (93). They decided "to boycott English goods, especially of Lancashire and Manchester cloth" (94) and resolved to wear "Khaddar, the rough home-spun" (94) and organized in the evening "bonefire of foreign cloth" (95), in the wake of Swadeshi movement led by Gandhi.

The Bachelor of Arts (1973) displays the protest of Chandran against any sort of injustice, untruth, slavery, imperialism and distortation of Indian history by the British colonial rule. We can witness an interesting debate of Brown and Chandran on issue of consciousness of India and Europe. Raghavachar, the nationalist professor of history, a Gandhi-like protestant, feels, "If he were asked what the country needed most urgently, he would not say self-government or economic independence but a classified, purfied Indian history." Chandran, too, loves to witness the undistorted face of India, the history of patriots as the makers of India in place of the British colonial distorted history.

Krishnan in *The English Teacher* (1945) is worried about English teaching in India and feels that English teaching to Indian students is like to feed them "on literary garbage" and the fate of English teachers in India is like "the paid servants of the department of garbage" (171). He feels dissatisfied with his profession as he could no longer...feed them on dead mutton of literary analysis and theories and histories while they needed was lessons in the fullest use of mind (206). Therefore he had decided to resign as the English teacher became the British

colonial educational system was going to attack a whole century of false educaiton" (205). Krishna's "innermost self" (207) remains satisfied with his search of soul and love of his motherland like a true son of India and a sincere patriot like Gandhi who accentuated for educaiton in the mother tongue.

The Vendor of Sweets (1967) displays a typical Gandhian follower, a well-to-do widower and a vendor of sweets. Jagan who along with a sale of sweets, sells a philosophy of life. William Walsh consideres Jagan "a disciple of Gandhi". P.S. Sundram calls him "a devoted follower of Gandhi", who "long after Gandhi's death continues to spin charkha everyday because of the vow he had made to his master, runs a sweetmeat shop where only the purest ghee is used whatsoever its price may be". It makes him a distinct and typical Gandhian.

Jagan feels himself proud as a vendor of pure ghee sweets and declares, "Purity that is important". He condemns and laments, "our merchants are becoming heartless" and he has "not raised the price here, in spite of sugar crisis"(76). Under Gandhi's spiritual guidance, he treats, "Money is evil" (98). He has a heart full of milk of human kindness and dreams to create a world of Ram Raj like Gandhi where there will be no beggars, no orphans, no destitutes. He considers beggars "a disgrace to the nation" (22).

He considers himself a staunch Satyagrahi and believes, "Once a Satyagrahi always Satyagrahi" (38). He propounds the concept of "simple living and high thinking as Gandhi has taught" (45). He spins Charkha in wake of Swadeshi and feels, "It's duty I owe Mahatma Gandhi: I made a vow before him that I would spin everyday of my life. I have to do it whether I am at home or in forest" (187).

Jagan is a naturalist philosopher and promoter of natural life and natural diet like Gandhi. As a love of "Natural care and Natural diet" (21) he takes "twenty drops of honey in hot water" (16) and prescribes everybody "a twig from margosa tree" instead of bristles which are "made of the hair from the pig's tall" (26). He evaluates margosa tree as 'Amrita' which "kept the gods alive" (26). He tells his foreigner daughter-in-law, Grace, that it is "a natural antiseptic" which "purifies the blood, supplies iron" (74) and examplifies his father as a lover of Margosa twig who "died at ninety without a single tooth loose in the jaws" (26). *The Vendor of Sweets* in brief, mirrors the shades and reflections of Gandhian consciousness.

R.K. Narayan's *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955) lays stress "not merely on Gandhi's influence but on Gandhi himself" and directly deals with "Gandhi's Satyagraha and his assassination in 1948". It takes us through "India's most difficult years 1940-48, and gives pictures of mass campaign

that led to India's freedom." It is about what Marvin Laster writes, "Gandhi's mission and transformation he effected in India."

It is a love story of Sriram and Bharati set in the national background of Gandhian consciousness. They are like the Malgudian Portia and Bassanio and their common concern lies in following the footprints of Mahatma and freeing the country.

Waiting for Mahatma is basically a portrait of Gandhi and his movements where romance of Sriram and Bharati blossoms with their allegiance to Gandhi. Bharati is "daughter of India" who wanted "something to do with Mahatma Gandhi" (38). She is Sriram's destination who "loves to be where Bharati is" (38). Everybody waited for the Mahatma in Malgudi in the scorching heat for hours and addressed them in Hindi as a mark of respect to his mother tongue.

Finally, we find out Narayan as a pure artist who is non-committal in his approach. If Narayan presents his experiences of Gandhian consciousness in his novels as a moral analyst and with a powerful ironic vision, Gandhi certainly reflects morality in politics and wages the war of Independence against the British rulers not as an enemy but as a non-violent solider. The liberation of India bcomes symbolic of liberation of humanity. Thus, Gandhian consciousness generates artist in their own style—Narayan as an artist of lterature and Gandhi as an artist of politics. Both attribute a rich fruition to politics and literature we harvest in the novels of Narayan with rich gleanings of Gandhian consciousness.

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10

Subalternity in Amitav Ghosh's Novels: An Overview

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh is widely acclaimd for his major novels in which he has expressed his concern for the downtrodden people of Indian society. In his major novels, Amitav Ghosh's sympathetic attitude towards the subaltern can be perceived. The problems of alienation, migration and existential crisis in life of unprivileged class of the society are explored through his fiction. The voice of the subalterns, their struggle and sacrifices which went unnoticed in the annals of the history began to get a prominent voice in the fiction of Amitav Ghosh in a different way. Through his writings he provided subaltern centerstage by making them as the pivotal character of his fiction so that they can raise their voice against the oppressive forces of the society. My aim is to analyze Amitav Ghosh's selected novels and to highlight his prspectives on subalternity. The selected novels for this paper are *The Circle of Reason, The Calcutta Chromosome, The Hungry Tide, The Glass Palace,* and *The Sea of Poppies.* In those novels Amitav Ghosh has realistically delineated the pathetic and difficult condition of the subaltern. The evil forces of poverty, homelessness, exploitation and subjugation have also been expressed in Amitav Ghosh's novels.

Keywords: Fiction, Subaltern, Centre, Struggle, Voice.

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most widely known Indians writing in English today, born in Calcutta on 11th July 1956, a Bengali author known for his work in English language. He is perhaps finest writer among those who were born out of the post of "Midnight's Children's" revolution in

Indian English fiction. He brings to the English an ease of felicity of expression which endows all his fiction with a quality of its own.

Amitav Ghosh has taken the theme for his fiction from the history, real events of life. The story of the common man, who have been the suffering to the maximum of these historical upheavals or political crisis have been taken as a subject of the fiction. These characters are the marginalized characters. Ghosh also answers the dilemma of the post-colonial intelligentsia regarding the ability of the subaltern to speak. He assumes the role of narrator of a narrative for himself who doesn't become the representative, but allows the representations of the subaltern group by the same group by providing them stage.

The novelist's abiding interest in listening to the voice of the anonymous individual, the typical person who is unrecorded in 'history', an obscure slave and his master in *In an Antique Land,* a mysterious urchin living in an Indian train station in *The Calcutta Chromosome,* an overlooked fisherman in *The Hungry Tide.* John Thieme is among the many who have observed that Ghosh, in all his writings achieves a large degree of imaginative empathy, "the product of a humanist concerned to transcend culturally constructed differences.... His concern with the recuperation and rendering of individual experiences operates against the kind of totalizing theory that habitually consigns subalternity to oblivion" (Internet).

Subaltern is the term that refers to the inferior rank or person from the below strata of society. Anotony Gramic first used the word subaltern in the essay "On the Margin of History" that can be associated with the people of those group in the society who are the subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include the people who have denied access to hegemonic power come under this category like farmers, workers or woman.

In his first novel *The Circle of Reason,* almost all the characters be it Alu, Shombhu Debanath, Rakhab, Toru Debi, Rajan, Zindi-al Aiffaha, Kulfi, Karthamma, Jeevan Bai Patel, Haji Fahmy, Zaghloulware belong to lower strata of society and forming the subaltern group, in this novel, the struggle of these characters and their survival issues has been penned down. It is noteworthy that *The Circle of Reason* came into existence before the author's involvement with subaltern study group. However, it sets their writer's interest in the lives of people from marginalized class.

In *The Calcutta Chromosome,* Ghosh has provided agency to the subaltern and tried to extend the reach of subaltern studies group. Mangala and Lakan though belongs to subalterns helped Ronald Ross in discovery. Their practices seems quite contrary to the scientific research for malaria but scattered information leading Ross towards the final

discovery. Thus, it establishes the established power and discourse on the agency provided by the subaltern. Subalterns have their own mechanism that saves them from being eradicated, here Lakan and Mangala achieved the positions of power as manipulators of knowledge.

Telwani mentioned in *The Hungry Tide,* Amitav Ghosh stretches the out-caste Dalit refugees from Bangladesh in Sunderban forests.... *The Hungry Tide* registers a response to the social and political concern of the marginal sections of the society. "The novel unfolds the events at Morichjhapi—in 1979 and subaltern consciousness demarcates the post partition movement of persons from East Bengal to West Bengal. Sushil Sarkar mentioned that refugees who belong to the subltern were forced to seek out a dwelling elsewhere. Morichijhapi incident took place then refugees were fighting for the survival.

The Glass Palace is the story of the three generations consisting in its several characters whose positions in the society keep on changing with the change of time and space. The King Thebaw,in *The Glass Palace* talks about the incomprehensible shift of power and margins in the society. The king's status of ruler to exile itself is again an example of how people in centre can shift to the margins the royal family is reduced to the status of subalterns. Rajkumar's position also shifted from subjugated and subaltern to the centre of power. The several other characters like Dolly, Mochao, Arjun, Kishan Singh in *The Glass Palace* mirror the focus of the author's interest in subaltern individuals.

In *Sea of Poppies,* there are several characters whose positions in the society keep shifted. King Neel and his family can be mentioned here as once the centre of power and society turns as a marginalized on the ship. Deeti can also be quoted here as once wife of high caste man is subaltern in the form of woman or become victim by marrying Kalua.

Ghosh purposefully brings subaltern characters into stories and focuses on personal histories of these individuals. The marginalized characters help in perceive life, events and issues from their point of view. The themes evoked in his works are in tune with concerns of subaltern theory. B.K. Sharma delineated this in his book, "Influenced by his association with the subaltern studies". Ghosh with his rigorous mode of empirical research recovered the characters of the masters, possessing hegemonic power and of their slaves, sighing and crying under the burden of oppression, be it for their caste hierarchy or for the British power or for their gender status.

To Sum up: his depiction of the term subaltern generates following points: the investigation and notion of Origin, to trace their customs and identies to their native location, an absorbing play of centre and margins,

enmeshing of cultural identities, complexity of the very play and shifts of nucleus, a demonstration of the fact that the subaltern can speak for themselves can be spoken about either through making them speak their stories or by creating stories on and around them in his writings. Thus, his writings are a demonstration of connotations and manifestations of the term subaltern in contemporary writings. He does not skirt difficult questions and he does not offer soothing answers that are sure to please his readers. His work is serious stuff. But it is also full of fun as is any good story.

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11

Dalit Women's Status in Indian Society

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Abstract

In the present global research century, subaltern theme has become so prominent that it is regularly used in various disciplines such as history, sociology, psychology, anthropology and literature. The word 'subaltern' is German word which means 'inferior rank' or 'secondary importance'. Thus Subaltern literature reflects various themes such as oppression, marginalization, gender discrimination, subjugation of lower and working classes, disregarded women, neglected sections of society, deprived classes, etc. In the context of globalization, 'Third World' countries are encountering the state of poverty and oppression. Post-colonial lays down conjectures in philosophy and literature that wrestles with the legacy of colonial rule. Indian Dalit women is not happy in such field—political and cultural, philosophical and economical.

Introduction

The Dalit word was originated from Sanskrit, dalita means 'oppressed'. It seems to have been borrowed from Hindi recently. It means (in the traditional Indian Caste System) a member of the caste that is considered to be lowest and has the fewest advantages. The origin of Dalit as a clan may be traced back to the *Rigveda*, the oldest Veda of the Aryan supremacy. The celebration of "Purusa-Sukta" myth dictates the origin of the Indian Caste system. Purusa is described in the *Rigveda* as, "the man...with thousand heads, thousand eyes, a thousand feet...the rule of immortality" (30), and it is said and believed by millions that all creatures are part of him; the human beings also are descended from his monstrous body. The

Rigveda further enunciates, "His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms were made into the warrior, his thighs the business people and from his feet the servants were born" (30). This forms the four Varnas: Brahmins (the learned men who become priests and religious leaders), the Kshatriyas (the strongmen who would be the warriors), the Vaisyas (them of business acumen who ensure prosperity through commerical transaction), the Shudras (the humble toilers who lacked the governing graces of the other three varnas). The four castes are subdivided into multitudinous subcastes and there is a final stratum of this ethnic division known as the untouchables, the lowest of all, so impure and despicable that stood outside the caste and the social structure of the Indian people altogether. This final stratum is known as 'Dalit' in modern linguistic terminology.

What is Subaltern?

Subaltern is a group, that is socially, linguistically, culturally politically and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure of the contemporary society; 'subaltern' as the term indicates, speaking linguistically, through the etymological roots that the word originated from the Latin term 'subaltern us' meaning next (sub), every other (alternus), imbibed into British English during the late 16th century, originally meaning, "any officer in the British army who is below the rank of captain", Oxford Dictionary explains. And when transferred to cultural studies, it has assumed the present meaning. It is derived from the cultural hegemony work of Antonio Gramsci, the author of *Prison Notebooks* (1926). The term has entered into the field of cultural studies through the works of Subaltern Studies Group, a collection of South Asian historians who explored the political-actor role of the men and women who were the mass population, rather than the political roles of the social and economic elites in the history of South Asia.

Different Names for Dalits

Dalits were calld by different names in different parts of India, invented by caste people and all entailling insult and contempt. Such names include words like dasa, dasya, raksasa, asura, avarna, nisoda, panchama, chandala and so on. The British had calld them as "Depressed classes" and the term "Scheduled Caste", after India became a Republic, has come to denote the entire Dalit communities officially. It is very sad to say that untouchability is prevalent even in modern Indian society, where educational opportunities are decentralized and the practice of untouchability is banned through Article 17 of the Constitution of India.

***Untouchable:* A Significant Novel**

Another significant novel, produced by a non-Dalit conformist, which portrays a day's events in the life of a sweeper boy, Bakha is Mulk Raj

Anand's *Untouchable.* This novel, indeed is an eloquent testimony of Dalit life. The novel was the result of several and wild urges that pressed the mind of Anand, and in "The Story of My Experiments with a White Lie", he comments: "The Vanity of youth wanting recognition, the departure from the abstract psychological theories towards the search for philosophic insights based on the lives of human beings, whom one knows in flesh and blood, the urge to express oneself at all cost in an absolutist manner, so as to expose the ugliness of death in life by deliberately dramatizing even through distortion the non-human realities which impinged on one from all sides" (Anand 6).

Untouchable is an impassioned place for social justice, and equality. Ite exposes the evil effects of Untouchability and analyzes its various aspects—social, moral, psychological, philosophical, historical and so on. Through incidents which provide structural unity to the novel, not only the novel narrates the pathetic conditions of the untouchables, but also the psychological conditions, whereby the mind of the protagonist is studied very intensively and hard realities are portrayed. E.M. Forster in this connnection observes: There is a need to examine and evaluate Dalit women's historical experiences from the perspective of caste, economic class, politics, and patriarchal angles, aimed towards the transformation in work, wages, and family life. Not only patriarchy and caste but also class divides Dalit women by bringing the moderinazation and Sanskritization. Dalit feminism must respond to the complexity of salience of class and the differences created by the caste-ridden society. They should make an attempt to emphasize the unity of caste, class, and gender and reject the efforts to bifurcate their identities. At the same time, they should challenge the over-determinacy of caste. In posing the fundamental chalalenges to the existing polarities between Dalit and non-Dalit women, linkages between knowledge and power, Dalit critical theory must continue to analyze the caste and patriarchy through social structural perspective that can be seen or evident in the writings of Phule and Ambedkar. Feminist theories' rejections of totalizing, universalizing, and homogenizing the frameworks of patriarchy have already paved a way to deconstruction. Now, it is required to develop a Dalit feminist theory to uncover and analyze the cultural, societal specifities which constructed the Dalit woman and recover them from the oppositions. The Dalit feminist theory aimed towards social justice and against all sorts of exploitation and oppression towards Dalit women. The Dalit women is a Dalit amongst Dalit. She has suffered and still suffering. She should walk through the burning desert of casteism in search of their true identity. Mrs. Bansode says that it is due to casteism that Dalit women are being behorned and molested. In one poem, she lodged a complaint

in the People's court in search of justice, but at last she attached the inhuman game of oppressors: The issues related to Dalit women have hardly been taken up seriously either by political leaders or by scholars until very recently.

Jyotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Amedkar's Contrubution to Women Empowerment

Education was given top priority in their agenda with a view that its lacerative effects would empower Dalit women and finally bring in social equality in Indian society. Thus, for the first time concerted efforts were made to give Dalit women a chance to avail of formal educaiton. Even though Dalit women from all parts of India could not get full benefits of the programmes undertaken by the leaders of the non-Brahmanic movements, there was at least a beginning. Phule was, perhaps, the first person in India to set up a school for Dalit girls in 1848 in Poona. His wife Savitribai helped him to run the school. As a consequence to this revolutionary step both Phule and Savitribai had to face lots of hardship including social boycotts from their community and outside. But they never compromised in their objective and whole-heartedly worked for the liberation of Dalit women. It is interesting to note that in order to defend his works among Dalit women Phule attacked brahmanical patriarchy citing the sufferings of Brahmin widows as the symptoms of the degradation of Indian society through his Satyasodhak Samaj. Phule worked for a democratic society where Dalit women could get their share of equality and education. Apart from educaiton, the leaders of the non-Brahmanic movements also introuduced among Dalit women various new social practices which challenged the hegemony of the upper caste and brought revolutionary changes in their day-to-day lives. Ambedkar condemned such patriarchal laws and advocated the policy of equal opportunities for both men and women. Even though the Bill could not be passed at that time Dalit women got several benefits from Ambedkar's initiatives. The Dalit women who had been privileged to participate in Ambedkar's movements later organized Dalit women from all across the aegis of Dalit women's movement.

Conclusion

The reason might have to do with the socio-political and economic conditions of Dalit women who continue to remain voice less even today. The establishment does not see any threat from this social group because Dalit women are yet to be united to raise their voices and thus, far from making their presence felt in the day-to-day politics of our country. Though attempts have been made in recent years by various political and socio-cultural groups to collectively organize them so that their voices can be heard, a strong all-India level forum for all Dalit women is yet to

emerge to give them a common platform. It is heartening to see that for last few years Dalit women under the banner of National Dalit Women Federation have started organizing themselves. But is has not been able to organize Dalit women from all across the country. Having distinct socio-cultural backgrounds and diverse language groups Dalit women will take time to forget their differences to forge unity among themselves. The fact that Dalit women's literature and more particularly Dalit women's autobiographies have started coming shows that Dalit women, if not collectively, at least individually, have started raising their voices. Before we analyze Dalit women's personal narratives it is, perhaps, necessary to know their socio-political and economic conditions in Indian society. Mostly the Indian leaders writings may help us to understand their lives better.

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Subaltern Voice in Siddharta Chowdhury's Story *The Leader of Men*

Dr. Bhavesh Chandra Pandey

"Heard melodies are sweet, those unheard are sweeter". (John Keats)

Post-colonial poetics is essentially related to the voice of the marginalized, the subaltern and the unheard. In fact colonialism is not just a political, economic system but a hegemonic superstructure that operates through marginalization, exclusion, opperssion, suppression, dislocation, disaffiliation, etc. Post-colonialism is a response to this hegemonic structure.

The term subaltern, popularized by the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), is generally used to refer to the marginalized group and to those who are socially, politically and geographically outside the hegemonic structure. It represents broadly social, political, religious and economic hierarchies. It has come to symbolize disruption and distortion of indigenous history, value and polity in the wake of external conquest, colonization and prominence given to westernization at the expense of indigenous mores. Subaltern Studies is an approach to study political coercion, economic exploitation and social marginalization or subordination. It is study of the relation of underclass or proletariat to the elite. The subaltern is a political or economic class of the deprived having lack of access to the centre. It is the peripheral class. The subaltern symbolizes the force that protests dominance, colonialism, subservience, alienation, and self-identity through resistance, confrontation and transformation. The study of the subaltern has expanded to include investigations of social transformation and enquiries into how and why some groups developed into elite classes who control resources and

perpetuate stereotypes, while other groups become subaltern community experiencing crisis and displacement. Subaltern Studies argues in favour of constructing history from below and to present the viewpoint of the underclass.

Gayatri Spivak states that everyone does not deserve to be a subaltern. Everone who fails to get a piece of the pie is not called a subaltern. She is against broadening the base of the subaltern. The subaltern theory takes the perspective of the 'other' as one that has no voice because of race, class or gender. Her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak" hones in, in the historical and ideological factors that obstruct the possibility of being heard for those who inhabit the periphery. This essay is a probing interrogation of what it means to have political subjectivity.

Spivak and Ranjit Guha (1988) focus on signifiers. The signifiers constructed by the colonizers leaves no real voice to the colonized or oppressed. Homi Bhabha believes that the ideas of the colonizers are expressed in the dominant discourse in which the oppressed and the colonized are not well versed, so they are not well versed in expressing their validity claims. Vinay Lal has raised the issue of why studies of the subaltern constantly utilize Western theories to comprehend estern data rather than turning to oriental models to comprehend those who were and are subordinated.

Patna born Siddhartha Chowdhury's story 'The Leader of Men', taken from his story collectin *Diksha at St. Martin's* (2002) is a tragic story of a poor man's hardships in a city life filled with social prejudices. This story shows the humiliation meted out to the poor by the rich and the resultant protest.

Siddhartha Chowdhury has altogether four books to his credit. These are *Diksha at St. Martin's* (2002), *Patna Roughcut* (2005), *Day Scholar* (2010) and *The Patna Manual of Style* (2015). He expresses in his writing the complications in the social fabric and the growing ambitions of the new generation.

'The Leader of Men' describes the conflict between Mr. Kedia and Roop Singh. Kedia is the president of the Owners' Association in Patna. He represents the rich class with all its mobility and pomp. He is a consummate consumer and is said to experience the pleasure of *nirvana* in buying things. If he does not get the latest model of car he finds something missing. His wealth is reflected in his stuck-up, haughty conduct.

On the other hand Roop Singh is a poor, landless man. His ancestral land has been grabbed by some organization. He is an educated man with a refined taste. He is smart and disciplined and cleanliness loving. By

nature he is stoic and melancholic. His poverty forces him to drop out from education and look for a job. He tries his luck as a private school teacher, an assistant in a grocery shop and finally joins the job of a private security guard in an apartment. He has to take care of his brother, his wife and his child with his trifling income of the 'princely sum' of six hundred rupees a month. He lives in the servant's quarter of the apartment and manages to sustain himself of potato and boiled rice. Nevertheless he is not devoid of a sense of dignity. He is the most sincere and dutiful of all guards. He reads newspapers and shares his news and views with all guards and also finds time to read serious books of literature borrowed from the narrator.

The story describes the first encounter of Kedia in a very dramatic situation. According to the rule of the apartment, Roop Singh stops Mr. Sharma, a friend of Mr. Kedia from going upstairs without having his prior permission by talking on the intercom. As the friend of the President of the Owners' Association Mr. Sharma regards this denial as an offence and insult. Mr. Kedia also takes this matter very seriously. He starts shouting at Roop Singh in English, calling him a rascal. As a retort, much to the surprise of Kedia, Roop Singh also speaks in impeccable English and clarifies that he was simply doing his duty and that he meant no offence to anyone. This retort in English becomes unbearable to Kedia as it amounted to trespassing his elitist boundary. He complains Ritwik, the narrator, against the conduct of Roop Singh thinking that he would support him against the class enemy. However Ritwik justifies what Roop Singh did. It was like an insult to injury and a thoroughly infuriated Kedia threatens Roop Singh to get fired from the job. After this incident Roop Singh stops to salute Kedia as a token of protest and Kedia is on a look out for an opportunity to insult Roop Singh.

Kedia gets this opportunity on the 31st of December when there is a send-off party in the apartment. On that occasion a rich menu of delicious items is arranged. The residents of the apartment assemble in the party. But a huge quantity of food is left unused as people retire from the party without consuming it fully. Great heap of chicken and meat and biryani, and *paneer* and *kofta curry* and *gulab jamun* are left with no one to consume. One of the gentlemen felt in his heart 'the milk of human kindness' and asked one of the guards to go downstairs and call the other guards to eat up the 'damn things'.

On being invited thus the guards gorged on the odd so much so that two of them had upset stomachs the next day. Roop Singh was yet to take his food when Kedia rolled over to him and said loudly, *"So Mr. Singh, I hope you are not hungry now. You probably haven't eaten such fabulous food ever in your life, so eat carefully, don't overdo it"*. And he laughed and patted

on his back 'patronisingly'. This was a deliberate insult of Roop Singh and a public mockery of his poverty. *"Roop felt that someone had lit a long abandoned fuse inside his body and that it was snaking up slowly to his brain."* He put down the plate and left without eating.

Roop Singh grows hopelessly melancholic and full of hurt and pain. In a depressed state he thinks of his loyal brother, his beautiful young looking wife and his beloved land that has been grabbed by people holding flags with hammer and sickle. At last he remembered his little son's face that made him lose the delicate balance of his mind. In this hot state of mind he ripped the lobby apart with his bare hands. He broke the glass revolving doors, the wooden bench, the plastic chairs and the intercom system. He was in such an agitated state that he could not be controlled by one guard. He was tied later on. His face was swollen, his hands were badly smashed to much so that he would not be able to work with it again, and his eyes were expressionless. Kedia didn't come to see him.

The story narrates the conflict between the rich and the poor, the haughtiness of the privileged class and the inferiority complex of the depressed class, and between the elitist ego and the poor man's self-respect. It shows a class conflict between the rich and the poor. Roop Singh belongs to the so called forward class and has got some education from the College of Commerce, Patna. He is a disciplined and sincere person even then he is humiliated because of his low status and perhaps his poverty. He is outside the hegemony of the privileged people. In this hegemony, power and authority decide what is right and what is wrong. In this construct, the rich is always rights. About Kedia the writer says, *"He had been rich and the rich are always right; according to him there could be no two ways to it."*

Kedia is hurt because Roop Singh shows the guts to stop his friend Mr. Sharma. He is particularly more offended when he retorts him in English language. He treats English as an asset particularly of the elites. He is dumbstruck at the retort. He says in utter surprise, *"You talk English to me! How dare you talk?"* His elitist pride is pricked and he could have been wrong. He threatens, *"I will kick you out."* An offended Kedia complains against the conduct of Roop Singh to the narrator whom he regards an 'ally' against the class enemy. With his hurt class snobbery he nurtures a prejudice against the guard and is on a look out for an opportunity to get him fired from his job.

Roop Singh represents the subaltern class outside the hegemony of the rich. He is poor and landless and under the compulsion to work as a private security guard for a trifling sum of six hundred rupees. With all his intellectural refinement, ancestral pride, efficiency and competence he is pathetically poor. He gets insulted for no guilt of his own but due to

the class snobbery of the rich. If he stops Kedia's friend from going up without talking to him on the intercom, he was doing what he had been told to do. Ordinarily he was doing his prescribed duty. The crime that he committed according to Kedia, was that he did not apply the sense of practical judgement that exempts the rich from following the rules.

Roop's reaction in the end is symbolic. When Kedia mocks at his poverty in the send-off party on 31st of December he does not speak anything. However he is unable to bear the emotional hurt. The memory of his family and particularly his little son makes him restless. He thrashes the entire lobby as a show of protest as it becomes the symbol of the hegemonic structure that he wants to break. His helplessness, anger and frustration combine in his show of revolt. This is the revolt of the subaltern.

The class snobbery of the rich is evident in both the episodes of the story. In the first episode Kedia insults Roop Singh even though he is innocent and threatens to get him fired showing his arrogance. In the second episode the callous attitude of the rich people is shown when the poor are invited only when a large quantity of food is left unused. They are not invited beforehand. Adding insult to injury Kedia mockingly cautions Roop Singh. On the social ladder Roop Singh is a 'forward' as specified by the author only to suggest that he is not ordinarily a subject of humiliation on account of his caste. He belongs to the caste of people who were once 'leader of men'. His humiliation is subject to his low rank of job and above all his poverty. Roops's protest is not simply a protest of the poor against the rich; it is rather a protest of the hurt ancestral pride, sense of self-respect and desperation of poverty as Kedia treats him as a non-entity. It is a protest against the hegemonic superstructure and the class snobbery of the rich.

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From Rejection to Self-assertion: Reconstructing the Black Female Identity in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* and Gayl Jones' *Corregidora*

Smrity Sonal,
Dr. Rajni Singh

Rejection, no less than the fatal stings of racism and sexism, can be witnessed as a common wound contributing to the overall 'scars' of Black womanhood. Along with the mundane sufferers (of race, class or patriarchal oppression), black womanhood is also struggling "under the scars of slavery" (Ashford 74) that hinders her identity throughout as an 'individual' or as a 'female'. For this reason Gloria Naylor in one of her interviews to Angels Carabi, defined the black women as "invisible black females" (Carabi 26), reflecting their actual status in society as well as to the external world. These recurring issues of segregation, marginalization and predicament of black women has simultaneously nurtured and developed the foundations for Black womanhood that rests on these women's unique ability of—'community' building, 'healing' and 'survival' through solidarity (Carabi). As Naylor puts it in an interview "Women only had each other in our history" (Carabi 32), therefore these bonds among women confer their "identity, purpose and strength for survival" (Andrews 1989). Analyzing such strong ties among women, Nnaemeka asserts "Women appropriate and refashion oppressive spaces through friendship, sisterhood and solidarity" (quoted in Khalghi). Thus these bonds seem to assist the healing process and survival of black women, helping them carve out their own dominant identity, amidst their journy of pain and struggle.

Rejection and Self-assertion of Women in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*

The idea of rejection runs throughout Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*. Right from the setting and situations to the characters created and

developed by the novelist, one is simultaneously engrossed to experience this sense of refusal and decline. The setting, 'Brewster Place', though imaginary, itself is portrayed as a 'bleak' (Naylor 1982, back cover), 'abandoned' (Naylor, 192), 'dead-end street' (2), that 'still waits to die' (192). The idea of rejection is still carried when Brewster Place is portrayed as the society of the socially cut offs that indudes—the blacks, the lesbians, the unmarried mothers and their ebony coloured daughters.

Following the technique of short story writing, Naylor has divided her novel into seven sections that deals with the stories of rejection, healing and self-assertion of seven dominant female characters depicting diversity in the black feminine experience. Each section, apart from dealing with the issue of rejection, conveys a story of pain, struggle and hardships endured by these black women and their own unique way of overcoming it, thereby reflecting the true traits of Black Womanhood.

Beginning with Mattie Michael, a very strong character created by Naylor, has throughout her life been portrayed as a victim of rejection. She has always suffered decline from the patriarchal end that included; her lover, Butch Fuller, father, Samuel and her most beloved son, Basil. Fuller, showing his momentary love towards Mattie, impregnated her and left her alone to face all hardships of life, rejecting all his responsibilities. Following, she was abandoned by her father who could not stand Mattie's illegitimate pregnancy, and was ready to beat her till death, forcing her to leave her home. The most unexpected and painful rejection borne by Mattie was when she was left by her dearest and only companion in life, her son, Basil, for whom she fought with the entire world, her family and people around her. Rejection from her very own people has taught Mattie the definition of pain and loneliness. She learned to live despite all the misfortunes that life has to unfold before her. This added to her strength and hope, helping her to rediscover her own identity that was something totally internal and independent of her external world. Knowing and undergoing through the greatest pains in life Mattie became a healing balm for several other wounded souls round her. She played the roles of their mothers, daughters, sisters and many a times what Collins calls an "other-mother", by means of her "ethics of caring" (Quoted in Khaleghi 131). Through the rejection of Mattie, Naylor tries to bring in the idea of how rejection from the external world may lead to one's own self discovery.

Another instance of denial endured from the patriarchal end is reflected through the story of Etta. Naylor depicting the social irony reveals to her readers how clergymen like Reverend Woods use women as mere objects for sexual gratification. A strong bond of eternal friendship

and sisterhood is portrayed, where Etta rediscovers herself in the companionship of Mattie.

Cora Lee's abjurement from family was a result of her strange obsession for dolls that was soon replaced by real babies. Even the shadows that came at night and impregnated her never showed up during the day. She lived a life just for the sake of living and raised her children with no goals or any future plans. It was Kiswana who ignited the desire within Cora to live and learn and raise her children in the best possible way she could. Like the character of Mattie, Kiswana too is portrayed as a community-mother who works for the upliftment of the women of her community helping them recognize and value their own unique selves.

Unlike others, the character of Ciel is portrayed as a domestic and devoted woman, a kind of woman who "have no choice but to believe they only exist and have a meaning in the context of a home, a man and a family. This is how Ciel defines her identity" (Carabi). She longed nothing beyond a husband and family and was unfortunately deprived from both these necessities of her life. She was not only abandoned by her husband Eugene but also by her family that ended up with the death of her only daughter and companion, Serena. As she knew nothing beyond a sense of home, this kind of a rejection defined something even more fatal than death. It kept piercing her soul, with a wound that refused to heal. It was Mattie again who healed Ciel. She "rocked her" (103) out of her bed, out of that room, bathed her out of that grief, ultimately "exorcising the evilness of pain" (104). Thus Mattie abiding by the promises of Black foremothers helped Ciel regain her own self playing the role of an "other-mother".

The stories of Mattie, Etta, Cora and Ciel define rejection borne by black women as a dependent entity on black patriarchy as Naylor believes it to be that way when in an interview she asserts that ninety per cent of the pain endured by the black females comes either from their 'lovers', 'fathers' or 'sons' (Carabi).

One of the most powerful female characters that seconds Mattie is Kiswana Browne. Miss Browne has been portrayed struggling amidst the two worlds—the Black and the White. In her case, rejection is not only witnessed coming from the other 'white' community, but apparently comes from her own 'Black] community when she could not identify herself with her own people due to her straight hairs and lighter complexion. Such a rejection affected her psyche deeply and she suffered from a severe identity crisis, undergoing extreme measures attempting to overcome the condition. Kiswana's eternal wounds were "healed in a conflict with her mother" (Khalegri 133) when she identifies herself with

the mother, as a woman. Followed by this enlightenment, she for the first time notices her mother's bright red toenail-polish that resembles her own, depicting her symbolical re-connection with her mother, and her own people. Naylor here uses motherhood as a tool to heal the eternal scars of a daughter's psyche.

The rejection of the lesbian couple Theresa and Lorraine from Brewster Place portray them as rejected among the rejected for their unique choice of sexuality. Their banishment from the society and their own people forced them to be victims of uninvited criticisms, misbehaviours, abuse and even rape. With the rape of Lorraine, Naylor did not seem to provide any healing to her wounds, which may be a result of their exile from the society that restricted their sense of community and womanhood.

Thus Naylor in her novel, *The Women of Brewster Place*, intelligently weaves in the idea of rejection, healing, and survival of the black women through their united sense of womanhood that splits into other kinships of—motherhood, sisterhood, other-mothers or community-mothers (Khaleghi). The source of rejection may vary from patriarchy to society to sexuality, but the mode of healing and survival is attained merely through 'womanhood' and 'companionship'.

The Idea of Rejection and Self-assertion in Gayl Jones' *Corregidora*

Unlike Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* that is a direct portrayal of the decline and reassertion of several black women belonging to different strata of black society, Galy Jones' *Corregidora* seem to be more complex in its approach. While Naylor created different female protagonists corresponding to different section of her novel in order to define the idea of rejection in various degrees in the African American context, Jones on the other hand creates a single female protagonist, Ursa, to express and speak for her long-silenced three-generation matrilineage. Thus, the female characters in Jones seem to be more subtle than those in Naylor's novel, as they carry much more than their individual selves.

Ursa Corregidora, the protagonist in Jones' *Corregidora* is portrayed as a composite character. Her complex psychology was not the result of any sudden injury or abuse affiliated to her own self, but of that long-silenced history of abuse, rape and sexual exploitation that was endured and condensed within the mind-vessels of her foremothers and gradually instilled into the minds of the following generations. She lives with the haunting memories of 'their' past that she was made to experience through the narratives of Great Granl, when she used to work in a plantations owned by Corregidora, "the Portuguese slave breeder and whoremonger" (Jones 8). What is known to Ursa about Corregegidora, as it passed down her matrilineal legacy is that "He fucked his own whores

and fathered his own breed" (9). Ursa is the last of the Corregidora women and her life is witnessed to be dominated by what Milatovic calls it as the "ancestral subtexts"[1] of her foremothers. She longs for an identity of her own as she along with her foremothers continuously suffers from an insidious trauma[2] to such a degree that they "become the ancestor" (Harb quoted in Milatovic 2). She finds herself trapped within the scars, 'memories' and anguish of her preceding three-generation matrilineage that settled/seated like dust covering her own individual identity.

Ursa being a composite character is throughout seen to be imitating and reflecting the essence of her foremothers through her own character, voicing their muted cries of abuse that was buried under the cruel past of slavery. Ursa, therefore, cannot be studied as an independent individual, but as an attribute depicting the femininity of her entire preceding generations. So, even the idea of rejection and self-assertion in Jones' novel cannot be dealt in isolation, but needs to be studied and analyzed in a composite manner, showing a cause-and-effect relationship among the women of four generations sharing the same predicament. Great Grams forced sexual encounters with her white master Corregidora is suggestive of her rejection by her own black men. Similarly, Corregidora's incestuous relationships with his so called daughter (Ursa's Grandmother), is again suggestive of her denial by the men of her own community, as Corregidora would always say "Don't let no black man fool with you (...) I don't wont nothing black fucking with my pussy" (127). The rejection that Ursa's mother faced was somewhat similar and yet different from her preceding generations. Like her foremothers, 'Mama' too faced rejection from their own black men, Ursa's father, yet the difference lies in the fact that unlike Great Gram or Grandmother, she was a free woman, free to choose her own man and not a puppet at the hands of any white master like Corregidora. Ursa's rejection was totally different from her foremothers. Though she got her husbands, she suffered a brutal decline from the maternal end when she failed to produce generations. With no daughter of her own to transmit her maternal verdict, Ursa felt as if "something more than the womb had been taken out" (6). Ursa's experience of rejection was a completely different one, a plight that seeks no resemblance with *'theirs'*, as all of *'them'* were able to produce generations. Ursa, living her own life, was simultaneously made to live "what they all lived through" (9) and therefore her own abjurement gained relevance in the light of *'their'* decline. This corresponds to her decline of her husbands, Mutt and Tadpole and even a gradual rejection of her own sexuality. Yet, towards the end, Ursa's reunion with Mutt after a long gap of twenty-two years is suggestive of Ursa's ability to re-locate herself amidst of all the chaos and echos of *'their'* haunting past. Ursa's

indulgence in a sexual act with Mutt suggests the healing of both her physical and psychological scars, depicting sexuality as an independent entity of reproduction. Just as Ursa's rejection corresponded to *'their'* rejection, therefore, Ursa's healing too corresponds to the healing of her entire matrilineage. Thus the healing that *'they'* had been looking, believing it to be something external and separate, ultimately, comes out from deep within *'their'* own selves, through Ursa. Ursa finally seeks and reasserts her own identity knowing the fact that it is something that comes from within, contributing to one's own individuality, and not by merely making generations and passing down 'memories'.

Conclusion

Dealing with the same themes of the 'Rejection' and 'Self-assertion' of the black women, the two writers Glolia Naylor and Gayl Jones seem to handle it differently on different grounds. Naylor on one hand is witnessed dealing with a multiplicity of the issues of rejection that are borne by black women and their multiple ways to deal with the problem in order to reassert their own individual identities that is attained through kinship and community. Jones on the other hand deals with the same issue of rejection, not of an individual self, but of a larger legacy of women that is defined and fixed through a single-complex character of Ursa. Both the writers hint on the role of 'womanhood' and 'community' as necessary entities for the construction and reconstruction of a black woman's individual identity as well as for her ultimate existence and survival. In Naylor's *Brewster Place*, the idea of womanhood and community is simpler as it exits on an external plane within the black society. In Jones' *Corregidora* the idea of 'womanhood' and 'community' is an intricate one as it exists within the protagonist's complex mind that was forever preoccupied with haunting memories of her ancestral past of slavery. Yet in both the novels we witness womanhood, where companionship with one another leads to the healing of the scars. Rejection may come from the patriarchal end, or the society or even from the self within, but what matters the most is how that decline and its fatal scars are fixed by these black women in order to continue living, hoping and dreaming. A dream with which they 'get up', and pin it to the "wet laundry hung to dry", the dreams that are "mixed with a pinch of salt and thrown into pots of soup", the dreams that they "draped around babies", the dreams that "never disappeared" (192). This is the kind of healing that the black women longs for and she believes to have achieved it one day when she says, "But I kept saying one day when I've gotten rid of the scars, when I'm really well and over all that's happened so that she can be proud of me..." (177). It is a kind of healing that has to come, come ultimately from within, thereby exhilarating the very soul of the

victim so that she is ready to confront life and its challenges in future and continue to survive amidst all the odds life has to offer.

Notes

1. The concept of 'ancestral subtext' is discussed in Milatovic's essay "Cycles of Violence: Ancestral Subtexts in Gayl Jones' *Corregidira* where he defines this idea as the 'implicit' and 'direct' aspects of the ancestral narrative that are continuously present in the characters' lives.
2. 'Insidious Trauma' is a concept given by feminist trauma theorist, Maria Root, which is discussed in Maja Milatovic's essay entitled "Cycles of Violence: Ancestral Subtexts in Gayl Jones' *Corregidora*. According to the concept, women living in a culture that is burdened by some kind of abuse or assault (like rape) to the women of their tribe or ancestors, feel the degree of their trauma to such an extent that they consider themselves to be the victim, with a continuous sense of fear.

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14

Santal Belief Regarding Life after Death

Anjula Murmu

India has been the homeland of huge number of ethnic groups and cultures since pre-historic time. The communities that were the earliest inhabitants were identified by various names. The most common term which is being called as 'Adivasis ' and other names designated to these communities are such as 'Vanyajate' for castes of forest, 'vanvasi' for inhabitants of forest, 'paharia' for hill-dwellers, 'Adimjati' for original communities and 'Janjati' is called for folk people. But all these designation are the umbrella term under 'Adivasi'.

'Adivasi' is an umbrella term for heterogeneous set of ethnic and tribal groups. They comprise a substantial indigenous minority of the population of India. These communities have almost developed their own separate social identity as far as their customs and cultures are concerned.

Santal, the aboriginal tribes of Santal Pargana in Jharkand are the largest homogenous tribe in the country. They are nature-loving people and love to make abode on the lap and cradle of nature. Their life style is quiet simple, sobre and pristine.

The beautiful art on their walls of muddy houses attracts one's eye. They are skilled in archery, handicrafts, painting, hunting, music, dance, drama and narrating folktales. Their creativity in their spontaneous poetry and songs in any situation, functions and occasions can often be seen. Though they have had no written records of their own but a great deal has been written and jotted by the foreign travellers, missionaries and British administration and recent by the new scholar and writers. The first book named *Santhalia and Santals* on the Santals was published

in 1867. The writer of this book E.G. Man, was an Assistant Commissioner in the newly formed district of Santal Parganas. The other writer on Santal who were then the Administrator such as Carstairs, O'Malley, Hunter and Archer wrote a very good accounts of the Santals, their land, customs and habits. Before these writers the Christian Missionaries took the first active interest in Santal language and culture. There are few more who took the initiative in promoting a better understanding of Santal culture. Larsolsen Skrefsrud and Paul Olaf Bodding contributed much to preserve the history of Santals. They published the book on the traditions and institutions of the Santals in 1887 in Santali Language. Bodding Published more than twenty-five works on the the Santals including two grammers and a five volume dictionary. This is very intresting to know that the most of the studies or research by the foreign scholars were done before India became Independent. While most of the studies by Indian scholars were done after Independence. J. Troisi in his classified and annotated bibliography on the Santals in 1975 lists 487 entries of books, monographs, articles and reports on the Santals were written up to 1975. After Independence, sixty-two books and eighty-three article dealt Santals, were written by foreign scholars. While after August, 1947 only 13 books and 12 articles on the Santals were published by foreign scholars.

The Indian scholars also had published 11 books and 49 articles which studied the Santals and 45 books and 163 articles after Independence.

The world 'culture' has been derived from the Latin word 'cultura' which means "the cultivation of soil or the raising of domestic animals".

According to E.B. Taylor, 'culture" means "that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society".

"As with society, so with religion, external form is the condition of its existence. As a social animal, man is a ritual animal" states Mary Douglas. The concept of Religion embedded in ritual is strongly emphasized in beliefs. The Santal's belief of Bonga, Thakur Jiu and Jaher Era is same as the belief of other religion in other names. Santals are the true worshipper of Nature God. In other words we can say that they are the worshipper of nature. The one idea which gets repeated in tradition, thought and culture is the inseparability of nature and culture. There is an implicit acceptance of the fact that human beings constitute an integral part of nature.

Santals have their own belief regarding the life after death. They have various concept of life and strongly postulate that the human life is gifted by the Thakur Jiu (God) and only Thakur Jiu decides or plans for the end

of human-life often certain period of life span. All humans being, trees, animal, birds, creppers, etc., die normally when one grows old. But there are some abnormal death which occure against the wish of Thakur Jiu due to various reasons. The reason may be natural calamities, sickness, accidents, murder, suicide, etc.

The spirit of natural death is benevolent and causes no damage to human-beings of the entire Santal society or that particular family which it belonged. These types of spiritual elements are considered to be the forefather of Santal tribe which have transformed to bongas and resides in the new world in sky and on the earth. But the spirit of unnatural death converts into evil spirit. If a pregnant woman dies she turns into 'curin' and licks the body of a person who is her prey. It is believed that if the feet of pregnant lady are pricked with iron nail she fails to catch Shepards or crossing pedestrians near her grave due to wounded feet.

In Santal society when man dies some hair and nails are cut and kept in an new earthen pot closed tightly with a lid which is called "Jang baha". The Jang Baha is buried in the soil at the outskirts of the village and consigned in river during 'bhandan' ceremony. This ceremony releases the soul of the dead from the village area and betting it free to float around midway between the world of Santals and the kingdom of supreme deity beyond the clouds. The ancestor spirit or bonga is called 'hapram'. The hapram kingdom consists of those dead ever since man lived and died on this earth.

While crossing the graveyard the folk gossips among themselves and address to the deceased souls that they are their own people and must not cause any harm. Without absolute certainty Santal accepts as true that the miserable life after death can be made comfortable. So before burial all the belongings of the deceased—expensive utensils, metal plates, bowls and clothes are all buried with the body.

Thus, the Santal conception of the life after death is their own perception and intuitive discovery of humble atmosphere where innocence dwell. Despite in mordemization, economic development and the spread of education in 21st century, the Santal still believe in the existence of bongas. They have preserved their tradition, rituals, customs and culture in keeping pace with the modem society. They attribute 'Maran Buru', 'Jaher Era', 'more ko turui ko' and 'Hapram'. So that their blessings may always prevail in their society and enable men, women and children to live happy and prosperous life ever.

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15

A Critical of Dalit Women in U.R. Ananthamurthy's *Samskara*

U. Narasanna

One of the main trends in modem Indian English Literature is study of Dalit problems. Of course, in a way, this trend is a welcoming one because Dalits have been behind the curtains for centuries together, holding within themselves their pains and pleasures and troubles and turmoil. They reserve the attention of the progressive world today, so as to better their lives.

The present paper aims at highlighting the age old problems of making use of Dalit woman as an object of pleasure and later kicking them off. This kind of inhuman treatment to a Dalit woman cannot be acceptable in the modern society which bags off all round advancement. In Ananthamurthy's novel—*Samskara*, the women have been depicted in a conservative society, how they are treated. My paper also reflects on the incapability of the intellectual ethos which fall prey to the physical beauty of a Dalit woman.

My paper addresses a perennial clash between tradition and modernity which the Indian society is characterized by. The issues discussed in the paper would provide an awareness to the people in society in order to broaden their perspective of life.

U.R. Ananthamurthy's novel, *Samskara* deals with two Dalit women—Chandri and Belli who played an important role in the novel. Chandri being a prostitute with her professional attitude serves the purpose of getting self-realization for the protagonist of the novel Praneshacharya. The other Dalit woman, Belli is shown as ventilator to satisfy the sexual urges of a man which are considered as shameful by the upper class Brahmins.

Chandri's life is a natural one based on the realities and very near to the day to day happenings in a society of common people. Whereas Praneshacharya's life style totally depends upon the sentiments, emotions, feelings and illusions. This we come to know when his wife says, "that the Lord has given him a Brahmin birth this time and set him up in this kind of family." (2). At the same time the protagonist Praneshacharya enjoys high position in the community and his word is Vedic Gospel for them. He is the authority to find solutions relating to customs and traditions. He practices traditions in such a manner that he does not talk to a Dalit woman, because if he talks to her, he would be polluted and he would have to bathe again before his meal. This shows that he maintains distance from the Dalit woman. In another incident his wife suggests him to marry another woman as he has not enjoyed with the present wife. But Praneshacharya would not respond to her suggestion. It shows that he strictly maintains virginity. On the other hand, the same protagonist describes in detail the beauty of Kalidasa's heroine, Shakunthala in such a way that the young man who listened to his lecture could not bear to hear anymore, and he ran straight to plunge his heat in the cold water of he river. Still the protagonist thinks that he is against other women. At the same time, he expresses sympathy towards Chandri. This we understand when he says, "... how pure Chandri's heart was..." (20).

In spite of all these ideas, Acharya is not above all. He is a man like any other human being. He also wants to fulfil his natural urges, but he is waiting for the chance. When he was returning from the temple at night; he meets Chandri in a lonely place. With her guilty feeling she advances to seek pardon from him. While doing so, his natural urge bursts out and comes in physical contact with her. It reveals that a man with lust never feels shame. The author is successful in bringing the protagonist from the world of illusion to not only to the natural world but also a Dalit woman who is an ill-treated woman. This act of Acharya reveals that he completely forgets that she belongs to Dalit community and behaves as though an ordinary man behaves with his wife.

Chandri, the lady protagonist's relation with Naranappa is quite different though she is projected as a prostitute, but she is loyal to Naranappa. Naranappa, another protagonist in the novel is totally against Brahmanism. He ate what she cooked. He drinks in public. He gave her deaf ear, when she tells him not to eat cooked meat by her. Even Naranappa has gone to such an extent that he wants to dismantle the whole system of Brahmanism. His way of encounter seems to be rather aggressive. Whereas Chandri behaves in her way and succeeds in living together with Naranappa and which may be the strong reason for Acharya to advance himself for the sexual affair with Chandri.

Chandri, the Dalit woman needs to be appreciated because, when heated argument was going on between Praneshacharya and Naranappa, she tries Naranappa not to drink in front of Acharya. Since she had respect towards Acharya. This we can understand when, Naranappa was speaking to Acharya, "Chandri tried to stop him, but he pushed her aside. Praneshacharya closed his eyes and tried to leave" (23). Chandri needs compassion because she comes forward to sacrifice her gold ornaments for the sake of funeral rites. Acharya tells his wife, "how pure Chandri's heart was, how she had laid down all her gold" (20). Another important point of Chandri's behaviour to be highlighted here is that she wants to be loyal even after the death of Naranappa. Her feelings "All we need is now is a proper funeral for him. Then she could go away to Kundapura and weep for him there" (45).

We can also quote another incident that she goes to a Hindu man to seek help to perform the funeral rites for the dead man, but he rejects. Without losing her hope as a last resort, she seeks the help of a Muslim and completes the final rituals as a part of her duty. Nobody could imagine what would have happened to the corpse if that was cremated by her.

Another Dalit victim in this novel is Belli. It is strange but true that she had to satisfy the natural urge of a young Brahmin, Sripathi, to whom she was not prepared to do it. It is the description of the figure Belli as narrated by the author and the description of Shakunthala as described by Praneshacharya is not only similar one but also equally attractive. This coincidence in the figures makes Sripathi to embrace her, knowing fully well that she is alone and that is the best chance for him to make use of her, for satisfying his natural urge. He wants her but only to satisfy his physical need. It shows that his enjoyment is important rather than her sound.

Another thing to be considered about is that she is not willing to have contact with Sripathi. So, she says, "not today" (40). He not only disregarded her words of protest, but he also disregarded the death of Pilla and his woman, whose bodies were in the fire.

Chandri and Belli are an eye opener to the past and present generation. They are depicted in such a manner that for the men of Brahmin in normal circumstances, customs and traditions and Brahmanism are very important to expose themselves a high in the society. But to fulfil their natural urges, it is women who ever it may be, serves their purpose. So both Praneshacharya and Sripathi come out of their line of control. In this novel those two Dalit women not only play a greater role in getting realization for them, but also made them to understand the significance of sexual urge. Thereby, they fill the gap between Brahmins and the Dalits.

16

Death Consciousness in the Poetry of Niranjan Mohanty

Dr. Manas Ranjan Samal

Death, as commonly understood, is the end of the individual sentient creature. The poet who writes of it or who mourns the pain of personal loss continues to experience life in all its myriad experiences in the body and mind. The pain of loss casts agony and haunts memory. This turns into acceptance slowly as the current of active living and fresh emotions flow, over it. Sometimes man endures it within his being, as a result, one feels lonely or isolated from life.

Death is inevitable. Whoever is born, must die, "if it is not now, yet it will come" says W. Shakespeare. For John Donne Death should not be proud, rather subservient to mortals and opens up eternity. W.B. Yeats does not dread death, for he is convinced that "death is but passing from one room to another", Death is end of life of physical being and leaves immutable impression forever. It may, be made transcendent and magriificent or it may fill the mind with images of shuddering horror. Confronted with death the poet may feel simply that there is nothing to say either of hope or dread. This feeling comes through very strongly in the slow sorrowful cadence of Niranjan Mohanty on his Nephew's death who drowned in the pond, 'The Honey Child'. He accepted death as a quiet consummation, a sorrowful event at man's helplessness. It carries the accent of piercing personal loss. The poet reveals truth on death, and aptly says:

"Perhaps, truth between dying and death
Truth settles some-where, moistening the air with colour of tears".

(oh' this bloody game 17)

Death is silence. The scene of death prevails and rides on his psyche while embarking on poetic journey from obscurity to clarity and complex to simple. It becomes a soothing experience for the reader as he, like the poets comes from darkness to light. The first poetic collection *Silencing Words* the Jungle of obscurity comes out packed with images, myths and symbols. The poems seem obscure as the poet plays with words to harness meaning in silence and lacks appeal to heart. The poet tries hard to decipher the language of 'silence', a novel poetic device where speaks more than words what he calls "space between experience and expression.

"Words melt in woods" and silence is a 'poetic idiom' for Niranjan Mohanty, the poet.

In the same vain, American and English poets use words with much caution as words create order and disorder. The poets direct their creative energy in silencing them. Robert Frost in his essay "The Figure a Poem Makes" says, "words that have become deeds" and which are really "certain elastic principles". We may say that like Frost, Mohanty the poet, shows his 'originality', 'delight' and 'wisdom' through his poetry. Mohanty tries hard to balance content and form in all the poems in the volume *Silencing the Words*, moreover, like Frost succeeds a unity of blending heterogeneous elements in his poems with his intense, penetrating poetic vision. The poems appear as a single autonomous entity. Mohanty, the poet, touches reality, "the vast chaos of all" and creates a clarification of life, confusion is subdued. Herein lies similarity with Frost.

On the other hand, we can discern that Frost's poems begin with simplicity and ends with wisdom, a complex philosophy—of life aligned with mysticism whereas Mohanty's poems begin with complexities steeped in symbols, images and learned allusions, and finally enlightens readers imagination.

Now, let me take up Frost's much admired poem 'stopping by the woods on a snowy evening' as case in study. This poem is suggestive of profound thoughts and utterances about human life and death, the great leveller. The poem opens with speaker standing in the woods. The scene and means employed to portray it, call our attention. Across the road from the woods that the speaker is passing through, there is a frozen lake. Houses are beyond the vision of the speaker and quietness/silence marks the scene. It is snowing heavily and the speaker can hear the soft and almost in audible sound made by wind and the soft snow-flakes falling in the woods.

The dark woods 'perhaps symbolize the dark, impenetrable, unfathomable mystery of life, and snow as usual symbolizes the cold destructive force called death. It is as though the speaker was literally

caught in the woods on a snowy evening and on another level, he is caught in a moment of time, arresting all his powers to find an answer to the mystery of life. The only possible answer to him is the death, the ultimate reality, an absolute power, of which man has a strange fascination and an inexplicable horror.

In the second stanza, he introduces a foile, a "queer horse". The speaker and the foile share the same delusion, they fail to make decision, what would happen in the dark woods? Does it not suggest a latent death wish in the speaker and a desire for self-annihilation in order to taste death?

In the third stanza the horse stands for the soul and the exchange of dialogue between horse and speaker is none other than a dialogue between self and soul, before meeting ultimate reality—death. Such death-wish becomes clear through the symbol of darkness and snowfall.

The final stanza of this poem begins with a comment on the scene—"the woods are lovely, dark and deep". The poet is the man of the world. He has to go on his defined path and has his obligations to tend before he can yield to spontaneous, natural, passionate calls of nature. He has miles to go before he can sleep. The repetition of the line, "And miles to go before I sleep", is symbolic. The first line gives the meaning that He has to go a long way before he gets to bed tonight. The second line turns to symbols. 'Miles to go', plausible meaning is the dimensions of tedious, unending journey of life, and 'sleep' means the final sleep, the death.

When Frost dramatizes death, Mohanty fancied death. Like John Donne, Mohanty interrogates with audacity and asks:

Where's your abode?
In a busy and bemoaning city,
or in a quiet, cool-rooted village?
Do you inhale the same air,
drink the same water
as I and my friends do?
- - - -
Doesn't you mother cut your mails
every Sunday? you look
so shabby, so untidy, day by day! (41)

In the second part of the 'Death', he has accepted meekly as an innocent and beloved grandson. His granny is cremated, "tongues of flame licked her body—spat on me lehre ash's". His father pats on him as he sobs and says. "His absence was to be endured". The 'tears' and

'uncertain fears' on 'white absence' echoes all the time thing "remains unsaid" (42).

The uncertainty of death baffles him, "Between nights lips, and day's eyes", he feels shy and says with vaulting voice, "who says I'm afraid to die?" (16).

The poet Mohanty realizes his own identity through certain step. The movement or stire introduces him to himself. "As I move or fly or float or escape/certain movement, or a certain stire/makes myself, tethers me to myself". He is not afraid" to go into the dark, into the cave/where silence and darkness/share their breath" (51). Sometimes he is frustrated to see the irrelevance of life that he makes Duryodhan declare:

"Come death, oh my dear death,

burn away my boiling body, and freezey breath!

what am I to do here when all is lost.

Convert me to a handful of all-embracing dust! (80)

(Swimming across the river of blood)

This realization occurs in another poem 'Damaghosa' (whose were as unlimited as Death's). Damaghosa is a very important character in the Mahabharat. He had the power to foresee someone's death. The name has semblance with Yama's name when the battle is over, he invites death, and surrenders himself:

The battle is over and won

misery makes myself so for-lorn!

what shall I do with this slimy score?

Embalm me, oh, my Master, I burn,

Console me, oh, my Master, so that I turn

To write my name on the slate and erase it

to prolong your song with an unsoiled delight.

Similar death-myth finds best expression in other two poems of Robert Frost, 'The Death of the Hiredman' and 'Home Burial'. The hired-man, Silas is old, decrepit and helpless. His plight evokes our sympathy as he does not even have any refuge. The poet celebrates his death with epigrammatic force:

"Poor Silas, so concerned for other Folk

And nothing to look backward to with pride.

And nothing to look forward with hope,

So now and never any different. (210)

All differences between have's and have not's is die with him, justice and charity became on with him. Level is maintained, progression is compressed.

Some sense of tragedy is expressed in the poem 'Home Burial'. The essence of the poem is developing conflict between wife and husband over the woman's way and the man's way of bearing the painful sorrow caused by the death of their first born child. The burial scene is poignant and unfolds the unfathomable mysteries of life and death. The wife screams and wails

"Oh, I don't need it !

I must get out of here, I must get air

I don't know rightly whether any man can".

Thus, both, Frost and Mohanty as poets are much sensitive and conscious on death. Death has been contextualized in the cannon of life—the life that provides a 'space' or exploring the unexplored areas which reveal the various paradigms never experienced before.

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17

Celebrating Humanism in the Poetry of Bhima Bhoi

Dr. Rabinarayan Sasmal

Bhima Bhoi, the Dalit saint poet of Odisha has raised his voice against social injustice, religious bigotry and caste discrimination in his poetic vision. As a firm believer in one God, one society and one religion he has made his pilgrim's progress from Manu's casteist world to the Dantesque world in his poetry. The goal of his mission is 'Jagata Uddhara', the liberation of entire world.

Being an untouchable, Kandh by caste, he wrote against casteism, selfishness, savagery, corruption and immorality in the society. Bhoi was a poet prophet of Mahima dharma which believes in one God, one society and one religion. It has gained popularity in the tribal belts of not only Odisha but neighbouring states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhatishgarh, Bengal and Assam. As a humanist and lover of mankind the poet believes in oneness of the humanity as a whole. He prays, preaches and sings songs for the spiritual liberation of the entire world from a mundane and manmade bondage. The focus of his poetic imagination is to preach compassion and commitment for the human beings. Bhima Bhoi was a true revolutionary poet for his intense love of man belonging to all castes and categories. He never believes in idolatry system of Worship, Brahmanical rituals and priestlihood. He has raised a protest for generating distance between human beings. He propagates and supports female education and secularism in his works. He prays God to save the world from perdition. His poem 'Jogata Uddhara' (liberation of the world) is a unique work in which he sings for all the humanity.

Among his works Stuti Chintamani, is a collection of one hundred bolis consisting of two thousand stanzas. It is a cluster of lyrics on his

life, religion and philosophy. Here my concern is with *Stuti Chinatamani* where he exposes the follies and foibles of the world and tries to solve the problem through Mahima Dharma. It believes in only one God who is sunya brahma or void. The Mahimaites touch no Prasad or tulsi leaf or medicine. They entertain no casteism or idlotry or belief in spirits. They say God is 'no where' and 'everywhere'. Like Buddhist they believe in non-attachment and rejection of casteism, idolatry and Vedas. Mahima Dharma onginated in the 2nd half of the 19th century. It took its birth out of the two great religions, i.e., Hinduism and Buddhism. Thus this religion characterizes a formless, timeless, indescribable, eternal god.

In *Stuti Chintamani* Bhoi has made people conscious of the disadvantages of deforestation. Adivasis are now no longer imbecile to tolerate the deforestation for they claim forests to be their homes and source of their livelihood The poet feels the environmental hazards. In canto XXV Bhoi exposes the anxieties of the Adivasis against the British colonization and the later's ruthless exploitation of forest resources and their own marglnalization in their own land. Bhoi writes:

Yavanas will come invading.

They will raze the woods to ground

Trees will. be felled

Not a single branch of leaf

Will escape the felling

The Adivasi protests against the internal oppressors too. The public reactions are reflected through his poetry. Bhima Bhoi's eyes filled with tears with the suffering of others. He says that a man is a part of this universe. The welfare of the universe is related to the welfare of its human units. He prays in the feet of Sriguru for the good of the world. In canto XXXV Bhoi expresses his intolerance towards injustice and cruelty to animals. He creates revolution in the mind of people. Through Mahima Dharma he starts this spiritual revolution.

Although Brahmins of the time revolted against Bhoi's superiority yet some Brahmins worshipped him along with the aristocratic ladies and upper caste people. In canto 63 the poet expresses the social reactions of Brahmins. Bhoi sheds tears for others. In another place of *Stuti Chintamani* he sings as why should I live when man suffers. Every prayer in the feet of Guru is for others. His soul pains to see cruelty, atrocity, the distressed and the destitute. His poetry is the record of his humanism. He says: "One sword cuts five or ten heads in the battle/My limbs cut whenever the limbs of other people are cut".

The 1866 famine of Odisha witnessed the death of millions. Food and relief aid could not reach across the flood affected people. The

following few lines record Bhima Bhoi's anguish over the ravages of this famine:

Nothing to eat Nothing to wear
Boundless is the anguish
Who indeed can bear to see such misery
Among the world's creatures
Let my soul be condemned to hell
But let the universe be redeemed.

(*Stuti Chintamani* Canto XXVII)

In Canto XXXIV the poet speaks of the "Tripura", the earth, the Heaven and the Hell which are filled with the influence of the evil of Kali, the Kaliyug. He says in Canto XXV:

Where will I hide myself?
How will I escape?
How long will I bear
Suffering on this earth?
How will I weather
The imminent danger?

As a philanthrophist the poet makes an appeal to the people to heed to the glories of Mahima, the incarnation of God. He wants to lift them from darkness:

O listen, you in three worlds, worship Mahima
See, how the age of darkness surrounds us.
Oh, all you people who live in this world
Listen, meditate on Alekha the Formless
That is your only deliverance (75 Boli/Canto LXXV)

The mode of his appeal is bhakti and the motivation is towards hope and confidence in spite of sorrows and despair. His purpose is how best benignity and goodness can be brought in and people can live in mutual trust and compassion for each other. Sunya or Zero is a poetic consciousness of the poet. It represents the process of life. Like a circle it has no beginning, no end only continuation, and its movement is controlled by itself.

Bhima Bhoi's verses are apocalyptic. He admits that Boundless is the anguish and misery of the living to which he cannot see and tolerate. He wants to save this entire world at the cost of his own. He prescribes the remedy in Canto L (50) as prayer and surrender at the feet of Mahima Swami are the only ways for survival.

Bhima Bhoi is extremely shocked to know how the sanctity among girls and married women is lost in this civilization. Taking food and sleeping comfortably are the goal of their lives. Men crave for power and pelf which turn them to be idiots. They lose intelligence due to avarice and selfishness. All are sinners. In Canto LVIII (58), Bhoi comments on the decadence of human race.

In canto LXXIII (73) of *Stuti Chintamani* Bhoi criticizes the sex drives of human beings. These drives lead their lives to hell. Killing animals and attending prostitutes are due to their drives for which Bhoi prays his Sriguru to give him strength to dissuade them from such hellish things.

In Canto LXXX (80) Bhoi warns man to surrender before God, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent. The good name will live in this world when we die. The wordly belongings will be left behind and none of our relatives accompany us to the other world when we pass away. Truthfulness is the only asset of man. Hence he wishes that the people must give up violence, hatred, machination, selfishness and anger. The disintegrating effects of contemporary immoralities and untruth has been put on record with a prayer to God (Alekha Parambrahma) to save these erring people. He writes:

Truth honesty no where, lost in the sky
World without virtue, evil everywhere,
Violence stalks the land
Quarrels every home
People fight and kill each other
The cup of sin spills over
Amazing, how untruth strikes like lightening (58 Boli/Canto LVIII)

The poet speaks of the essence of *Bhagvad Gita* in Canto LXXXVIII (78). He says that a human body is constituted of five elements like earth, water, fire, air and space. Mind is above body and soul is above mind and each human being is a spark of divine. Thus, purification of soul is vital for the prosperity of the universe. Life is an amalgamation of good and evil, virtue and vice, happiness and sorrow. It reminds us of William Blake's poem as:

Joy and woe are woven fine
A clothing for the soul divine
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.

Bhima Bhoi prayed and preached, composed and sang for the liberation of entire world. He sought a synthesis between the life of the

world and the life of the spirit. He prayed for animals, insects, trees and human race. The equilibrium of nature depends on the existence of all living and non-living things.

Bhima Bhoi was equipped with a style which is so bold and so mellow at the same time. He dreams of a world that will be ruled by the laws of the Lord eternal and where nothing but supreme truth will be ultimate dispenser of things. He sees presence of divinity in all things and objects.

The *magnum opus Stuti Chintamani* is an important work of Bhima Bhoi . When the divisive terrorism has brought the world to a critical juncture, his message of oneness of human kind becomes more and more relevant. His innovation culminates in words which have made Bhima Bhoi immortal not only in Odia but in all literatures. His soul stirring couplet:

Let my soul be condemned to hell

But let the universe be redeemed.

finds pride in the parliament hall of India. He is a genius who passed away in 1895. For his permanent contribution to the cultural heritage of Odisha, the poet-prophet of Mahima Dharma Bhima Bhoi is unforgettable. He was a humanist as well as a visionary. The goal of his mission is Jagata Uddhara (liberation of entire world) which makes him known more as a humane ascetic poet than as a historical personality.

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18

Are Indian Daughters Difficult or Audacious?: A Feminist Perspective in Manju Kapur's Novel, 'Difficult Daughters'

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Abstract

The present paper aims to probe into the patriarchal attitude of the society in which it fixes certain taboo or derogatory identity to women. Manju Kapur shone into fame, receiving the Commonwealth prize with her debut novel, *Difficult Daughters*. The title of the novel attracted the attention of many research scholars. Why did Manju Kapur give the title *Difficult Daughters* to her first novel? and why not 'Audacious Daughters'? Daughters who are not submissive to the patriarchal norms are termed as 'difficult' daughters by the society. This attitude of patriarchal society is giving vent to social evils such as female foeticide and gender discrimination. A deep dive into the textual ocean of *Difficult Daughters* makes the fact clear that the protagonist, Virmati is not a simple girl, putting age-old ideals into practice, rather she is 'difficult' because she is treading an age-old ideality of male dominated society. Instead of accepting and respecting a women's self expression, she is condemned. The paper investigates into how the socio-cultural force work in the complexity of search for identity of womanhood in the Indian Society. The patriarchal structure of Indian society is discussed in the light of feminism.

Keywords: Patriarchal structure, Feminism, Socio-cultural force, Identity, etc.

Introduction

An empirical view of the world gives us an opportunity to witness the contradictory image of women. In one part of the world (European nations) women are enjoying the pulf of modernism while in some other

parts of the world women are stoned to death for asserting her individualism (a woman was recently stoned to death for choosing her life-partner in Afghanistan Willgress). In India itself, we have a diversified image of the women. On one hand, women, living in metropolitan cities are enjoying so much craved individualism. On the other hand, women living in small villages, where the rays of modernism are on the way, are still struggling for their identity under the roof of patriarchy.

In today's scenario, women in India are in a great dilemma. The different avenues of the world are inviting them to come and explore the things. Women have proved their ability in almost every wing of human activities. However, the patriarchal structure of the Indian society is pulling them back. If a girl does something against the patriarchal norms, she will be looked down with certain derogatory attitude. If she starts asserting her values in the society, the patriarchal society imposes certain taboos on her. The aim of the present paper is to put the patriarchal structure under scrutiny, how the patriarchal structure has put shackles around the female activities in the society, how she is being moulded and reshaped in accordance with male centric societal needs as reflected in Manju Kapur's novel, *Difficult Daughters* (1998).

Discussion of the Study

Why 'Difficult' and Why 'Daughters'

Manju Kapur is one of the widely read and most critically acclaimed novelists of Indian English literature. Why did Manju Kapur give the title *Difficult Daughters* to her first novel? and why not 'Audacious Daughters'? It is, because the socio-milieu of the novel is dominated by patriarchal structure in which a girl- child is reared with great care, for the honour and pride of the family is rested on her and thus looked as difficult. The novel is set against the backdrop of partition of India and Pakistan. It is the portrayal of a young woman, Virmati tom between her family, her education and the lure of illicit love on the canvas of the patriarchal frame. Again the novelist has used the plurality of the noun 'Daughter' Manju Kapur has successfully presented three generations of daughters (Kasturi, her daughter Virmati and Virmatis' daughter, Ida) who are viewed as 'difficult' by the patriarchal society. Kasturi, mother of Virmati has shown the glimpses of 'difficult daughter' for she, in her childhood tries to deviate from patriarchal norms by praying before the image of Christ. Virmati, the protagonist of the novel has violated the patriarchal norms with conflicts and paid heavy tax for the same. Again, Ida, daughter of Virmati is a modem woman who broke the patriarchal norms with great confidence. The process of overruling patriarchal norms which began with Kasturi, went through the transitional phase with Virmati and finally took the solid shape with Ida who is 'without husband, child or parents' (DD 4).

The paper will not focus on Kasturi as she had accepted the term, 'Difficult' as her identity and accordingly adopted the patriarchal norms. Similarly it will also not focus on Ida who has strongly violated the norms. Rather the interest of the paper lies on the protagonist, Virmati who is in transitional phase of violating the norms and thus needs critical investigation of her deeds. The actions and activities of Virmati are not innocent or submissive rather are of bold nature. Her childhood experience has laid the foundation of her future deeds. The responsibility of keeping her siblings in discipline has fallen on the shoulders of Virmati. When Ida takes a reverse journey into the life of Virmati, she is told that "she would lash out if we didn't listen. We used to run from her when she came. She was only our sister, but acted very bossy" (DD 5). However, Ida does not want the superficial/external image of her mother. She says, "my relatives gave me one view of my mother, I wanted another" (DD 5).

The Concept of Patriarchy

The term 'patriarchy' has been used to describe the power of the father as head of household. It refers to the systematic organization of male supremacy and female subordination. The patriarchal structure is defined as a system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. The concept of patriarchy is ingrained in Simone de Beauvoir's seminal book, *The Second Sex*, who famously says, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." According to her, women have been always forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men. Another one of the most influential figures among the patriarchal theorists is Kate Millet. In her *Sexual Politics*, she writes:

> "Our society, like all other historical civilizations, is patriarchy. The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, technology, universities, science, political office, and finance— in short, every avenue of power...including the coercive force of the police, is entirely in male hands...what lingers of supernatural authority, The Diety, 'His' ministry, together with the ethics and values, the philosophy and art of our culture—it's very civilization—as T.S. Eliot once observed, is of male manufacture". (25)

According to Andrienne Rich, "traditional woman is conceptualized as a duped and powerless victim. Her degraded position has few, if any, redeeming features. The power of the fathers, acting either directly or indirectly through agents (lower- class males and women) permeates everything. Men define the role women are to playas they define the language and patterns of thought. Women were incorporated into a family structure controlled by men and created to meet their own needs.

The role of motherhood is especially disvalued, with mothers acting primarily as male agents in the socializing of the men's children. Women have certainly perpetuated these male institutions, but only because they have submitted to male domination of their will" (47). Women have internalized the norms of patriarchs. Thus they become willing, obliging and passive sufferers.

Virmati : Difficult or Audacious

Manju Kapur's novels deal with an enduring struggle of female protagonists to break the chains of patriarchy and are in quest of identity against the dogmas of social and cultural thinking. *Difficult Daughters* is set in 1940s Indian society in which patriarchal structure was more dominant. Manju Kapur's protagonist, Virmati is portrayed not only as a revolutionary woman who revolts against her family but also as one who stands for her education and freedom. She raises her voice against male prejudices to claim her rights of economic independence. Kapur makes her strong enough to undermine patriarchal taboos and break social and cultural constraints. Thus, from the patriarchal point of view she is 'difficult daughter' because she does not follow the norms set by the patriarchy, rather she defies its established norms and shows tremendous courage in following her determination and aspiration for freedom and individuality and therefore in the eyes of feminist she is an 'audacious daughter'.

Family as a Patriarchal Agent

As argued earlier, patriarchy has internalized its values into the family system. In a spirited journey of Virmati towards her emancipation, her family members have played a role of patriarchal agent, especially her mother, Kasturi. Since her childhood, Virmati has tough moments with her mother. "The language of feeling had never flowed between them and this throat was meant to express all her thwarted yearnings" (DD 12). Kasturi is the ideal creature of patriarchal influences, according to whom a girl should marry at proper time, she should be educated enough to manage household works, she should be obedient to visible God (husband) and invisible God. She expects the same things to be ingrained in Virmati. However, Virmat is not destined to tread the steps of her mother. She rebels against her mother. At the tender age of seventeen, she has to go with her mother to look after her and other children. When Kasturi asks her to sew a sweater, she revolts against her mother.

> "I'm tired of knitting and sewing, Besides, I am here to look after you I can look after myself, Why did you bring me if you don't need me, Mati?" (DD 12)

In patriarchal paradigm, a mother is authorized to raise her daughter on the set norms of patriarchy. Kasturi is the voice of all the patriarchal

norms for Virmati who wondered, "Why was her daughter so restless all the time? In a girl, that spelt disaster" (DD 15). Virmati wants to go to Lahore for higher education but her mother wanted her to be married because, "it is the duty of every girl to get" (DD 15). Unknowingly the mother becomes the representing agent of patriarchy. Her assertion of individualism and self reliance had shaken the patriarchal norms of family and therefore, it boycotted Virmati from her family. A girls' assertion of her rights are looked down with contempt. The following words of Kasturi bear the testimony to this:

> "You've destroyed our family you badmash! ... you have blackened our face everywhere! For this I gave you birth? Because of you there is shame on me, shame on Bade Pitaji! But what do you care, brazen that you are!" (DD 221)

Thus, the patriarchal norms have raised the walls between Virmati and her family. The relations are strained enough that she she is not allowed to attend the funeral ceremonies of her father and grandfather. In patriarchal system of believes, men are entitled to have more freedom than women. Harish, the professor is also the guilty of same offence as Virmati. But Harish is not discriminated in the society. A women is never free of patriarchal burden for she is constantly caught in one after another patriarchal entraps and this is equally true with Virmati. Therefore, Seema Malik writes about Virmati, "Though she dares to cross one patriarchal threshold, she is caught into another, where her free spirit is curbed and all she does is adjust, compromise and adapt" (Malik 135). Thus the actions and activities of women are placed in the patriarchal structure, and often its result is subordination of women.

Virmati's Crave for Education

Virmati is not a traditional woman who prefers to be locked into the four walls of house. Rather she is a modem woman who recognizes the value of education. After meeting Shakuntala, whom she dreams as a role model, her protest grows stronger and it starts with her wish to continue her education. She firmly believes that education is the only means to liberate her. However, as Kate Millet observes in *Sexual Politics*,

> "Traditionally, patriarchy permitted occasional minimal literacy to women while higher education was closed to them. While modern patriarchies have, fairly recently, opened all educational levels to women, the kind and quality of education is not the same for each sex. This difference is of course apparent in early socialization but it persists and enters into higher education as wel!." (42)

Virmati falls victim of gender discrimination when her desire for higher education is thwarted by her parents. Her fiancee's parents also

didn't want too much education in her. However, the death of her fiancee's father postponed her marriage with Indrajeet. Instead of sitting back at home, she is given the permission to attend AS college. After her marriage, Virmati is allowed to pursue her M.A. from Government College, Lahore (even the subject of M.A. is chosen by Harish) in a circumstances in which it was better to keep her away from home to solve the domestic problems. Hence, the education of women is in men's hand. Thus instead of many hurdles and hardships Virmati pursues her education which enlightens her mind and broadens her vision.

Virmati: Her Economic Independence

Virmati knows that dependence on others will not give her an opportunity to express her identity. She wants to be free from 'dependence syndrome' as Chaman Nahal wishes (17). She believes in economic independence of women. Her affair with Harish has made her life full of uncertainty. She longs for meaning in life. Finally she realizes that her economic dependency cannot give her identity. She decides to join as the Headmistress of a Girls' school in the hill station of Sirmur. Her days as the Headmistress are the most conspicuous days of her life because for the first time she feels her existence. However, in patriarchal society men, "by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division labour define the part that women shall (or shall not) play" (Rich 41). Harish does not allow her to play the role of economic independent as a school headmistress. He secretly visits and entraps her into the sexual oppression. It tarnishes her reputation and the Diwan sahib asks her to resign because, "It is important to set a good example." In this way, her only opportunity of liberation and identity is destroyed.

Virmati's Love for Harish

Her marriage with Indrajeet is postponed because of his father's death. This resulted into her going to Lahore for further studies and there she meets and falls in love with Harish Chandra, an Oxford-returned Professor who lives next door to her and is already married. For her, Harish is incarnation of freedom. She is deeply attracted towards his intellectualism and all the speeches on love and independence of women. Virmati is caught in conflicts between dull and dry letters of Indrajeet and love-drenched letters of Harish. Slowly but steadily Harish invades not only her mind but also her body. She falls prey to sexual oppression of Harish who uses her as a sexual being.

> "Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees. She appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex... absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference

> to man and not he with reference to her, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to essential." (Beauvoir 534)

The continuance of illicit relationship with Harish leads to many troubles. She fails to demand her status from the Professor whose baby she conceived before marriage. She is forced to abort the child. She feels void when she aborts the child, she laments, "That a child of their union, the result of all those speeches on freedom and the right to individuality, the sanctity of human love, and the tyranny of social and religious restraints should meet its end like this" (DD 171). Ever since the arrival of Harish in her life, she has lost not only the cozy nest of her family but also her pure mind and body. She becomes furious when Harish refuses to marry her. She audaciously retaliates him.

> "I break my engagement because of you, blacken my family's name, am locked up inside my house, get sent to Lahore because no one knows what to do with me. Here I am in the position of being your secret wife, full of shame, wandering what people will say if they find me out, not being able to live in peace, study in peace... and why?" (DD 149)

Twist and turns in her life make her realize and affirm Swarnalata's statement that "Men do take advantage of women" (DD 149). Though the actions and deeds of Virmati had earned her the name 'difficult', her suffering, her humiliation and above all, her incessant determination made her an audacious daughter. Thus we see the emergence of Virmati as an audacious woman who does not want, "to be a rubber doll for others to move as they willed" (DD 92). She overrules patriarchal norms and notions that subordinate women in the society and announces her individuality and determines for self reliance through education.

Conclusion

Thus the life journey of Virmati from an innocent milk drinking girl to the revolutionary woman is full of ups and downs. Her revolt against her family which acts as a patriarchal agent, her determination to pursue her education in midst of many hurdles and hardships, her aspiration to be economically independent and finally, her gallantly falling in love with the married man, Harish are the acts and incidents which can be interpreted in different ways. The milieu in which the novel is set, the space in which the characters are created is characterized with the dominance of patriarchy. Interpreted with this reality, Virmati is certainly the 'difficult daughter' as she has created whirlpool in the lives of those who are the silent sufferers of patriarchy. However, many eminent feminists have proved the invalidity of patriarchy. Today women have equal rights in the execution of their abilities to achieve their perfection. In this direction of thought it can be said that the determination Virmati has

showed for perfection, the efforts she has taken to achieve it and the suffering she has gone through, in the process of achieving it are undoubtedly audacious.

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Mulk Raj Anand: "The Prophet of the Underdogs"

Dr. Pradip Kumar Jha

One of the prime concerns of a great author is to highlight the cause of the dumb and the deserted, the lowly and the lost of an adverse society. The author also flings a harsh irony on the snobbery and hypocrisy, ostentation and fabrication of the aristocratic people, who sometimes stoop low to achieve the end. A writer, the princes of pen, is the true voice of the million mass particularly of the untouchable and the vulnerable, victimized by undeserved tyranny and injustice from the time immemorial.

Untouchable, the author's *tour de force*, peeps into the life of an untouchable, Bakha, the protagonist, who represents the misery and inhuman treatment of the crushed and the have not before independence. It also shows how an outcaste has to lead a life meaner than the animals; how in spite of his virtue, he has to tolerate insult and abuse, 'fret and fever' sometimes on cause and sometimes without any cause; how he feels like a caged bird that flutters its wings for a tree flight; how "his feeling would rise like spurts of smoke from a half smothered fire in fitful jerks when the recollection of abuse, or rebuke he had suffered kindled a spark in the ashes of remorse inside him." The novelist narrates a single day's events in the life of Bakha, an eighteen year old boy. He is the son of Lakha, the sweeper, the cleaner of the latrines. Through these two prominent characters, the author hammers hard on the caste conflict; a conflict which constitutes the core of Hindu religion and procures an obstacle in the path of peace and prosperity. Though this dangerous disease of caste conflict was on its summit before Independence, it is still seen much or less in almost every state of India. The untouchables or the

socially isolated people who form the most vital part of a nation have to lead a deplorable and miserable life beyond description. E.M. Forster, rightly holds the view:

> The sweeper is worse off than a slave, for the slave may change his master and his duties and may even become free, but the sweeper is bound for ever, born into a state from which he can't escape and where he is excluded from social intercourse and the consolations of his religion. Unclean himself, he pollutes others when he touches them. They have to purify themselves, and to rearrange their plans for the day. Thus, he is a disquieting as well as a disgusting object to the orthodox as he walks along the public roads, and it is his duty to call out and warn them that he is coming.

In the 'Well Incident' Mulk Raj Anand tries to show the water problem among the untouchables. The feeling of untouchability was so powerfully engraved in the mind of the upper caste that they never permitted the untouchables to fetch water from the public well. They weren't allowed to touch even the brook or pond as they would contaminate the stream. They had to wait hours beside the well and had to request the upper castes to pour water in their pitchers. According to Anand, they had to join their hands in service; humility to every passer-by; cursing their fate, and bemoaning their lot, if they were refused the help they wanted; praying, beseeching and blessing, if some generous soul condescended to listen to them or to help them.

Once Bakha inadvertently touched a caste Hindu in the market. The castemen became so furious that they began to chide, Dirty dog, etc. Bakha continued to listen to their insult and humiliation but he never opened his mouth. He bent down his forehead and mumbled something. But all his requests fell flat on them. The other man sitting there also began to hiss like a snake: "This dirty dog bumped right into me. So unmindfully do these sons of bitches walk in the streets! He was walking along without the slightest effort at announcing his approach, the swine". Bakha was surrounded by the crowd of the people. He was so confused that he was dumb-founded.

This episode created a furrow in the gentle mind of the untouchable, Bakha, whose smouldering rage broke like a volcano eruptions: "Why are we always abused? The santry inspector that day abused my father. They always abuse us. Because we are sweepers. Because we touch dung. They hate dung. I hate it too. That's why I came here. I was tired of working on the latrines everyday. That's why they don't touch us, the high castes".

It is to be noted that untouchability is one of the greatest evils of our country. The untouchables have been bearing the brunt of social

persecution from the time immemorial. In the *Manusmriti*, the law book of Hindu social code and domestic life, we see the pathetic plight of the untouchables, who are deprived of gaining knowledge, particularly the Vedic knowledge. An untouchable, this book says, has no right to go to the temples; no liberty to listen to the incantations of the Vedas or the other great scriptures. They are also deprived of the right of reading and studying the language, Sanskrit which is supposed to be the richest language, which has come to be almost a stand-still these days. So one of the causes of the degeneration of the Sanskrit language is untouchability and perhaps this is why Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar, R.N. Tagore and Swami Vivekanand, Maharshi Dayanand and Bal Gangadhar Tilak—all have given a scathing atack on the casteist mentality of India. Mahatma Gandhi even went to the extent of saying the untouchable, 'the Harijan', that is the man of God.

The temple incident of untouchable flings a harsh and rugged satire on the hypocrisy and ostentations of the upper caste people like Pandit Kalinath who, though hates the untouchable, yet invites Mohini, the sister of Bakha, to the temple in order to quench his sexual thirst. He makes improper suggestions to her. On her denial, he begins to shout—"polluted, polluted, polluted." What an irony! He is the priest, the highest caste in the hierarchy of caste-system.

It is to be nosed that Mulk Raj Anand strongly believes in the upliftment of the downtrodden specially the untouchable. His primary concern as a novelist is to present a humanitarian compassion for the Dalit and the deserted. He himself admits:

> I hope for a world in which the obvious primary degradation of poverty has been completely removed. So that man can have enough food, clothing and shelter to grow up as strong and healthy human beings, physically and mentally and pro-create a fine race to people the universe, in the place of those stunted, subnormal, miserable millions, tortured by starvation, disease, unemployment and war, which have been the background of my life. I want this for all men and women, irrespective of race, colour or creed, with special provisions for planned health and housing facilities for the backward and extra special provisions for the care of the very old and the very young.

Thus, the speech of Gandhi littered with humanistic compassion and motherly affection acts like the balm on the wounds of the protagonist, who longs for asserting his identity in a cast-dominated societal framework. It is his powerful advocacy that consoles Bakha's long suppressed heart fractured by, remorse and despair. Consequently the ray of hope and patience descends in the life. The novelist observes: "The sun

descended. The pale, the purple, the mauve of the horizon blended into darkest blue. A handful of stars throbbed in the heart of sky. He emerged from the green of the garden into the slight haze of dust that rose from the road and the paths. As the brief Indian twilight came and went, a sudden impulse shot through the transformations of space and time, and gathered all the elements that were dispersed in the stream of his, soul into a tentative decision: "I shall go and tell father all that Gandhi said about us, he whispered to himself, and what that clever poet said."

Munoo, the protagonist of the novel is severely despised and maltreated by the callous and entirely adverse people—his aunt in the village, the Bank Sub-Accountant and his wife at Sham Nagar, Mrs. Mainwaring at Simla, etc. Munoo who represents the million Indians, bears the brunt of social injustice and class antagonism from pillar to post. In the very opening of the novel we can see how Munoo, the 14 years old orphan, is ill-treated by his Cruiel aunt he died Where have you drifted, you of the evil star?" Munoo leaves his native land with his uncle, Daya Ram, the peon of the Imperial Bank of India and goes to earn the bread to Babu Nathoo Ram, Sub-Accountant. But his innocence begins to bleed when he comes in contact with reality. The employer's wife is so rough tongued and cold to him that she destroys the sweet dreams of this adolescent boy.

Well, hunger and poverty, exploitation and retrenchment of workers lead to the cause of a strike. As a result, this eruption gives birth to a Hindu-Muslim riot. Munoo is so much shocked and bewildered that he wants to escape from all these burdens and wishes to lead a life of solitude far from the din and bustle of city life. When he steals out of the place he was dashed down to unconsciousness by the car of Mrs. Mainwaring, an indolent lady, who takes him with her to Simla. She makes Munoo her rickshaw puller and page. But his health begins to run down due to over work, ill nourishment and undeserved sufferings—which collectively lead to his lonely death: "But in the early hours of one unreal, white night he passed away—the tide of his lire having reached back to the deeps."

Anand is of the opinion that even the poor and the socially neglected people can also rise to the status of the general people provided they are given proper facilities, proper education and proper justice. He rightly observes:

> I hope for a world where men and women will awaken through the first elementary battles for bread, peace, fresh air and freedom, which they are fighting to see the slow fire that is rising from the grey, smouldering ashes of their lives; so that, having struggled on a

> horizontal plane, they earn the right to stand perpendicular and touch the stars; so that they can perceive the true worth of their humanity, the dignity of man....

Mulk Raj Anand's third novel, *Two Leaves and a Bud* also expresses the author's great concern for the tears and sighs of the crushed humanity which culminates in a tragic clash between the poor and the rich, the Britishers and Indians, and above all, the proletariat and the Bourgeoisie. Gangu, a middle-aged farmer of Hosiarpur in the Punjab is tempted by false promises and fettered and oppressed by the colonial people in the McPherson Tea Estate in distant Assam. His wife, Sajani, and his children, Leila and Buddhu also bear the brunt of colonial exploitation. Here, Gangu and other coolies are mercilessly treated even worse than animals. It is a world where the innoncence has to bend down before cruelty; where the wives and daughters of the workers have no right to raise their voice against their masters; where the insulted and the injured have also to be the victim of pestilence, hunger and poverty; where the man like De la Harve, a sympathetic and ideal protector of the underprivileged, has to lose his job and his love only because of his sympathy for the Dalit and the destroyed.

Thus, this brief survey aptly shows that Anand's primary business as a writer of fiction is to attack the social snobbery and prejudice, superstitions and untouchability. He seems to urge for an attitude full of love and sympathy for the million mass living under the poverty line and leading a life worse than an animal. This way his attitude is tantamount to G.B. Shaw and Tolstoy, Balzac and Zola, Sarat Chandra and Premchand. Almost all his novels venture into that land, which is largely ignored. In the history of Indo-Anglian fictions, the credit at first goes to Mulk Raj Anand who identifies himself with the weak and the vulnerable, the hated and the insulted. About the principle of art and fiction he rightly observes:

> Certainly, literature, music and art better able to fulfil the needs of our time than religion, and beauty is better worth worshipping than God or a Deity for whom the sanctions lie in the institutions of a few mystics. For in art the creative imagination of man transforms the abstractions, justice, love, hatred, evil, etc., by passing them through the experience of the individual.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that Mulk Raj Anand is a novelist with some notions; a novelist who seems to have taken a hammer in his hand to blow hard on the dead customs and misleading traditions; a novelist who dives deep into the waters of Indian village life and churns out those unnoticed pearls and diamonds which 'the dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear'.

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The Kite Runner: A Note on Discrimination and a Call for Equality

Amal Babu
Dr. Mercy George

Abstract

Khaled Hosseini is one of the most successful fictional writers of twenty-first century. All his three novels—*The Kite Runner, A Thousand Splendid Suns,* and *The Mountains Echoed* are well received by both the critics and readers. He is well-known for his unique narrative style and his treatment of the themes that mingle with real life experiences. Apart from these literary achievements, his works give holistic view of Afghanistan. Hosseini's literary creations skilfully explore the historical, political, and social life of Afghanistan. His works advocate for the marginalized communities of the country. His first work, *The Kite Runner,* vividly expresses the relationship between various tribal ethnic groups, especially between the Pashtuns and Hazaras. The novel presents numerous instances of discrimination faced by the Hazaras in Afghanistan. Apart from the narrations of discrimination, the novel also develops as a purveyor of equality with same intensity and vigour.

Keywords: Khaled Hosseini, The Kite Runner, Afghanistan, Tribal Ethnic Groups, Pashtuns, Hazaras.

The Kite Runner (2003) is one of the most notable fictional creations of the twenty-first century by famous Afghan born American writer Khaled Hosseini. The novel is a first person narrative majorly through the retrospection of the protagonist Atnir, around whom the whole course of novel revolves. Many critics have attempted to identify Atnir with the writer and to establish this as an autobiographical novel. Even though Amir resembles Hosseini at times, it is not an autobiographical novel. Its

setting is real but the characters are purely fictional. Through the narration of Amir, readers get in acquaintance with the major recurring themes such as father-son relation, feeling of guilt and redemption, social and political scenario of Afghanistan for last four decades and its impact on different ethnic tribal groups in the country.

One of the major concerns for Hosseini in *The Kite Runner* is to explore the history of Afghanistan in the second half of the twentieth century and early years of twenty-first century. In relation to the history of Afghanistan, the whole narration of *The Kite Runner* can be divided into three parts; pre-war era, Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and the rule of People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), Afghanistan under Taliban rule, and post-war or contemporary Afghanistan. Apart from the political history of Afghanistan, *The Kite Runner* is an authentic document about the social system of the country. It describes about various ethnic tribes inhabiting over there, their life style, sufferings and so on. Thus, the novel beautifully explores the life of different ethnic tribes in Afghanistan and presents their life with all its myriad aspects.

Pashtuns is the largest and dominant ethnic tribal group in Afghanistan. Forty percentage of the country's population is contributed by the Pashtuns. Because of this reason, the word 'Afghanistan' often stands for the 'land of Pashtuns' (Barfield 24). A brute majority of Pashtuns are Muslims, particularly Sunni Muslims. A very small number of Pashtuns are Christians, but they are prohibited from performing their religious practices. Pashtuns find their origin from Qais, their great leader. The tribe holds its own unique custom, traditions and ethics called as "Pashtunwali" (Barfield 25). Pashtuns are grouped differently in relation with their lifestyle, geographical differences and their ability to speak the *'Pashto'* language. In terms of ancestral lineage, they fall into four different categories like *The Durrani, The Ghilzais, The Gurgusht*, and *The Karlanri* (Barfield 24-25).

Hazaras are the most exploited and unprivileged ethnic tribal society in Afghanistan. They consist fifteen percentage of Afghanistan population. They are the followers of Shia rules. They speak the dialect of Persian language and their physical appearances comprise Mongoloid features. They are the inhabitants of the central part of Hindu Kush region, which is also known as *Hazarajat* (Barfield 26). Until nineteenth century, they exercised independent power in Hazarajat. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, Abdur Rahman invaded their region and took away their properties and possessions and the Hazaras were sold in the markets as slaves. This practice continued for a decade until Shah Amanullah eradicated slavery and returned the land of Hazaras to them. Even then, for many years Hazaras were refrained from higher positions

in society and higher education. Still they worked as servants for meagre income. Later the Taliban rule made their lives more miserable. The Hazaras suffered brutal persecutions under the Taliban.

The Kite Runner vindicates the relation between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras mingled with realistic as well as fictional aspects. Hosseini's presentation of the relationship between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras reveals through the relation between various characters who belong to these two ethnic tribal groups. First and the most prominent of all the relations that illuminates on the Pashtun-Hazara relationship is the one between Amir and Hassan. In the first section of the novel, even though Hassan is the son of Baba's servant, Amir and Hassan are good friends. They spend time together, play together and they are partners in kite running tournaments. All these show the strong bond between Amir and Hassan irrespective of their tribal dissimilarities. Meanwhile their relationship shows light towards the persistent discrimination towards the Hazaras in Afghanistan. Even though Amir and Hassan are friends, Amir always maintains an upper hand over Hassan. Though Hassan plays a vital role in bringing victories for Amir in kite running tournaments, Amir solely receives credit oftheir success. Apart from this, Amir always enjoys the freedom to have education. Often Hassan is greatly interested to hear stories from Amir. In Amir's home also, this discrimination is evident. When Amir is enjoying his delicious food and all the facilities to study, Hassan is engaged in household works.

This tribal distinction between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras is more intensified with the introduction of the character of Assef, a boy who considers Hitler as his hero and having superiority feeling over the Hazaras. He says to Hassan, "Afghanistan is the land of Pashtunes. It always has been, always been. We are the true Afghans, not this flat-nose here. His people pollute our homeland, our *watan*. They dirty are our blood" (*The Kite Runner* 40). He appears as a well-disciplined boy amidst the society. But he is having sadist mentality and tries to have verbal and physical violence against the Hazaras. Moreover, he ends up in raping Hassan and Amir witnesses this. Amir is unable to help him and Hassan is unable to tell this to anyone. Thus, Hassan suffers silently. Gradually the guilt feeling in Amir's mind turns into aversion. As a result, Amir tries to avoid Hassan's presence from his life. Thus, Amir tries to provoke Hassan through different means by thinking, "I wished he'd give me the punishment I craved, so maybe I'd sleep at night" (KR 92). Surprisingly, Hassan remains calm and he proclaims his loyalty to Amir and to his family both verbally and physically. Unfortunately, all the efforts of Hassan to prove his dedication increase the guilt feeling in Amir.

Then arrives Amir's thirteenth birthday. Baba has arranged a well-organized birthday celebration, attended by a large number of guests including Assef, who presents Amir the autobiography of Adolph Hitler. Amidst the guests, Rahim Khan finds Amir alone. He tells Amir his unsuccessful love story with Homaira, a Hazara girl. Rahim Khan refers to this event with a feeling of guilt and repentance and gives reference to the common attitude towards the Hazaras, "she would have suffered. My family would have never accepted an equal" (KR 99).

Rahim Khan's recollection of his relationship with the Hazara girl contains some interesting parallels with the friendship between Amir and Hassan. Like Rahim Khan, Amir fails to have strong determination to act in accordance with his mind and break the friendship with the Hazara boy. Soon after the birthday party, Amir seems more disintegrated and Hassan's presence haunts him more intensely. Thus, in order to dispel Hassan from his surroundings Amir puts some money that he received on his birthday party and the watch received from his father under the mattress of Hassan. Then he reports a theft complaint to Baba. Here also Hassan surprises Amir and accepts the guilt of theft. Instead of sending Hassan and his father, Baba forgives to Hassan, but Ali decides to leave the home. As a matter of surprise for Amir, Baba pleads Ali to stay at home, but, undaunted from his decision, Ali, along with Hassan, leaves the home. This unexpected behaviour of Baba throws light on the relationship between Baba and Ali.

In the later part of the novel, from Rahim Khan Amir realizes that Hassan was the illegal son of Baba and Ali was suffering from that shame. This revelation of Rahim Khan has brought paradigm shift in the mind of Amir and he wants expiation for what he had done to Amir. However, by this time Hassan has sacrificed his life for Baba and Amir to prevent their home from the Taliban. Rahim Khan tells to Amir about Sohrab, son of Hassan and Farzana. He now lives in an orphanage at Karteh-Seh. Assef, Hassan's childhood tormentor—is the caretaker of this orphanage and he totally exploits Sohrab. Thus, with the passing of time, Assef turns into a sadist who feels an unexplainable pleasure in tormenting Sohrab. He makes Sohrab to dress like a woman and dance publically. Thus, Sohrab, who is good in himself like his father feels dirty due to the harsh behaviour of Assef.

Amir comes to Assef's orphanage to rescue Sohrab. Initially Amir fails to win the trust of Sohrab. In order to take Sohrab with him, Amir engages in a fight with Assef and Amir is being badly injured, alike his father Hassan, Sohrab comes for the help of Amir. Thus, after going through great sufferings and hardships Amir takes Sohrab to America. In America also Sohrab is not free from the haunts of his heart-wrenching

experiences and attempts for suicide. At the end of the novel, Amir helps Sohrab to fly the kite, starts to forget his dark past, and feels emancipation from his guilt feeling for what he had done to Hassan. Meanwhile the kite is flying in the blue sky advocating for the equality between the Pashtuns and the Hazaras.

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Survival in a World of Multiculturalism: A Study in the Major Fictional Works of V.S. Naipaul

Dr. R.K. Srivastava

A Trinidadian of descent from a family of Indian indentured labourers and one educated at and now residing in England, Naipaul cannot call any place his home or cannot take any place for granted. He can, at best, be a *visitor* wherever he goes, who sees things in their true colour. Instead of slipping into the role of a staunch critic of Western failings—spokesman for the victims of Western power and success—which would have been an easier task for him in the post-colonial world, he has become a powerful critic of that very role.

Naipaul had no tradition of literary discourse to rely on, writing as he was against the Trinidadian background. He could not draw on the assonance and resonances established by the natural and social settings of English literary works. As a result, he had to construct a natural and human background of his own special locale for his reader which made it necessary for him to look outward. The moving forces of his novels and essays are thus more often place, social order, and culture.

Like Doris Leasing, Naipaul has never quite lost the sense of a social being, of belonging in or being exiled from a society. Perhaps because they come from such colonial societies that are small enough to have a recognizable shape and identity, both these writers have a strong social sense which minimizes the solipsism and subjectivity of metropolitan life and which is carried by them into their exile. This social consciousness rules all their later thinking. 'Exile' or transfer to the metropolis represents a flight towards freedom.

Naipaul has converted his liability of having no tradition into an advantage. He has succeeded in making use of this freedom to acquire the intellectual freedom which has aided him all long in perceiving the world undistorted by reigning ideologies which current and sentimentalizes. It is this intellectual freedom and lack of any sense of obligation at the personal level to any particular place or culture which makes Naipaul a judge of the situations wherein disorder and chaos loom large where survival is not only difficult but also enigmatic. He minces no words in depicting a realistic picture which very often sounds bitter and harsh, as has been pointed out by George Lamming. The statement made by Lamming that Naipaul's works "cannot move beyond a castrated satire" and that satire is too small a refuge for a writer who wishes to be taken seriously is reflective of the rhetorical imperatives one comes across in Natpaul's fiction as well as in his travelogues where he tries to present a mimetic account of his predicament as a colonial. For Naipaul who has experienced 'colonial dislocation' the art of fiction has by and large represented the 'other means' whereby the lost self of man could be retrieved, clarified, and reinvigorated. This is probably what social and moral roles a writer can play beyond his self.

Up to *A House for Mr. Biswas* Naipaul was trying to find himself, identifying his home and his own identity, the one as a mirror for the other, the life of its protagonist Biswas being the story of the Indian immigrant's dilemma. It depicts the exile's desire to strike roots and attain an authentic selfhood. In the process, it also reveals the ethnic and social history of a community showing how communities are shaped by larger socio-cultural forces. But this is done by taking us through the inner world of Biswas. In *The Mimic Men*, he makes an attempt to readjust his perspective to that of the exile who looks outward instead of homeweard, the free man who imposes order on his freedom by giving it the form of memoirs. This adjustment to the condition of an exile from the place is completed. In a *Free State* which suggests Naipaul's own condition of permanent exile alienated from home. And after this work, the setting is always alien, man being portrayed as an urban guerrilla and even the Trinidad of *Guerrillas* is a foreign landscape. Finally, the home which Salim builds in *A Bend in the River* is Africa, no home at all.

Rootlessness is something which never ceased to make Naipaul uneasy, as he never stopped reminding himself of the Hindu origins and beliefs of his Indian ancestors in the Caribbean. The longing for Hinduism has something to do with his awareness of an inner void which is referred to in his latest work, *A Way in the World;* "that feeling of the void had to do with my temperament, the temperament of a child of a recent Asian-Indian immigrant community in mixed populations: the child

looked back and found no family past, found a blank. But I feel again now that I was responding to something that was missing, something that had been rooted out" (73).

Naipaul, however, did not devote his energies solely to tackle the problem of rootlessness. He went beyond and brought to light the suffocating littleness of his island home and the other Third World societies as such. In this endeavour what aided him the most are his first-hand encounters with these societies, his keen observation, and a totally detached and objective commentary. As a writer he reached out to the big world outside, though in the early books like *Miguel Street* and *A House for Mr. Biswas* he is found to fall back on the colonial geography of the Caribbean.

As a social analyst of the manners and morals of archaic, decaying societies as well as unformed and developing cultures Naipaul explores the fate of doomed individuals from the point of view of a comic outsider. Moved by panic and alarm, he views the disturbance, instability, and anxiety prevailing in these societies. His own expatriate status makes his works 'interstitial' in that they capture the texture of the lives of the people of both the cultures at the very crack between cultures. And this is the enigma of survival.

Naipaul's depiction of the internal and external disorder, decay, and futility as evident in this later novels like *In a Free State, Guerrialls*, and *A Bend in the River* brings out a unique quality of his narrative art. He makes use of images of unused or misused machines, tools, and other fabrication of the modern world such as the school building that never housed a teacher nor a student, the modern air-conditioned complex of the Domain constructed long before anyone could determine what purpose it would serve as in *A Bend in the River*.

While Naipaul's fictional form is consistently conventional, he makes it produce the effect of novelty by adapting it to the sophisticated techniques of fragmented narration, flashback and interior causerie to show the states of mind of his characters. His sweeping range from the early picaresque mode of *A House for Mr. Biswas* to the destructive metaphoric structure of *The Mimic Men* and *Guerrillas* in itself demonstrates the rhetoric of his novel. His novels deal not only with questions of identity, rootlessness, cultural difference, and assimilation brought about by migration but also with his own dilemmas as an exile about self and home and the psychological and political aspects of alientation. And this dilemma is nothing but post-colonial reality predominated by flux, chaos and predicament of perpetual exile.

In the novelistic technique of Naipaul, single crucial prosodies are made to ignite the whole range of experience in which the individual is

placed. The scene of the stormy night during which Biswas experiences the crisis of being, the scene of house-warning in *The Mimic Men* where Ralpl Singh experiences a violent eruption of self-range are a few examples to cite. *In a Free State, Guerrillas* also there are scenes in which Bobby and Linda, Roche, Jane, and Jimmy Ahmed experience the double void of self and space out of which emerges a sense of panic and alarm. These scenes enable the characters to stand out as symbols of the world which at once shapes and dramatizes the reality of man. And in his presentation of the characters and environment Naipaul reveals rather than judges them. His vision is fundamentally secular and sociological, which is in line with his conception of the novel as experiential rather than speculative. As a result, Naipaul's understanding of the violence, wickedness, brutality, and suffering in the human world is related to the historical and cultural particularities of the human societies in which people like Ganesh, Jimmy Ahmed and Salim who are not genuinely possessed by any deep sense of faith or religion exist. All of them, no matter whether they are tricksters or householders, oscillate between order and disorder, reality and fantasy, independence and obligation. They are men adrift in a world they never made, trying to assert their own self and hence constantly in conflict with the society. The tension between self and society is sometimes resolved in favour of an ultimate return to the norms of society as in *The Mystic Masseur* and *A House for Mr. Biswaws*, sometimes it is resolved by means of an attitude of ironic detachment on the part of the individual as in *The Mimic Men*. The individuals in Naipaul's later novels like *In a Free State, Guerrillas* and *A Bend in the River* are placeless, nomadic, and distress. They seem to inherit the same existential dilemma as that of Ralph Singh. Their yearning of order and meaning makes them discover chaos and meaninglessness in the external world as well as within their selves. Naipaul's *Half a Life* is the best example to illustrate this point. While Chandra's constant journey to find a comfortable anchor is a glaring case.

In order to portray this disorder and meaninglessness Naipaul makes use of images of decay and wastage drawn from technology and modernization in his later novels, just as it is done through images of blind imitation and mimicry going in the name of modernization in his earlier novels. Modernization in many areas of the globe involves the consumption and not the production of industrial good. The vision of a world of men who consume what they cannot produce is seen to haunt Naipaul's work. While this vision forms the background to the early novels providing them with a sense of humour and poignancy, it becomes the all encompassing presence that lends a tone of futility, rage, and pathos to the later novels. The world depicted in his novels contains endless variations of the "Cargo cult" and the people who inhabit his

novels are "mimic men" who attempt to achieve European power and success by means of a sterile imitation of the surface features of European culture. The disappointment, frustration, and disillusionment that become inevitable for these people, as is voiced forth by Ralph Singh, Salim, Bobby, Peter Roche, Willie Chandran and so on, is recorded by Naipaul in a detached and analytical manner making him a powerful exponent of the Third World reality.

In Naipaul's writing we find a double discernment which involves a capacity for fixing the subtlest nuance of individuality and establishing the reality of the social world. The imaginative objectivity of Naipaul both as a chronicler of life and as a creator of human character combines personality with impersonality. He enters into his own creative landscape. Dismayed by the distress and disorder that it causes, he retreats into an angry poise and a neutrality of despair. This kind of a love-hate relationship towards his vocation as a novelist has naturally raised much criticism against Naipaul's treatment of his subjects as well as the fictional methods he has employed.

Naipaul never hesitates to reveal the fact that the success and competence of the West ensues from its rational organization of life and human beings. Throughout his work, we encounter situations where strong irrational currents abide just below the modem surfaces of new states such as "the Elvira State." These may break through the surface with overwhelming tidal force whenever the fragile modern institutions fail to contain the ever present social tensions. At this juncture, one is reminded of the "After Israel Africa" riots in *Guerrillas* and the cult of the mother in *A Bend in the River*. About the time of upheaval *In a Free State*, Bobby says, "They are going to swear their oaths of hate. You know what that means, don't you? You know the filthy things they are going to do? The filth they are going to eat? The blood, excrement, the dirt." As Larry David Nachman points out, the generating principle of Naipaul's work is culture. Being a subtle observer of cultural distinctions, Naipaul's "sense of culture cuts through all those banalities of contemporary thinking which are reflected in the...Third World. His observations about societies representative of the Third World focus on their victimization on account of their clinging on to antiquity."

Naipaul further feels that in being proud of their ancient, surviving civilization, Indians tend to be its victims. In writing so, Naipaul hints at the need for some cultural principles as of the West guided by the practical view of life and free of magical thinking that is responsible for the "Indian intellectual failure"; and "Intellectual Confusion of India" and for the inability to go beyond the time-honoured and conventional explanation of the nature of things. In *The Mimic Men*, Ralph Singh says

that the writing of his autobiography was a kind of recreation in which the event becomes more historical and manageable and which in spite of its "initial distortion, clarifies, and even becomes a process of life." He concludes that his aim in writing his autobiography was to impose order on his own history. This is nothing but to affirm that intellectual freedom from myth and magic which enables men to manage their own survival and chart better ways of organizing their social life so as to understand their own problematic and meaningless existence. The Western literary tradition which abounds in such ideas as nature as an order, nature as completely intelligible and all natural phenomena as self-referential is woven into the texture of Naipaul's fictional art. This is to a large extent responsible for the intellectual freedom Naipaul enjoys and the secular order his works of art hold up.

The idea of the ontological misfortune of the non-Western is stated by Naipaul thus: "the non-Western is a lazy consumer who can use but could never have invented the telephone." While this is one view, there is the other view which offers a demystification of all cultural constructs, "ours" as well as "theirs." This is a new fact which has been highlighted by Hayden White whose thesis in met a history is that all historical writing is primarily writing and delivers figural language and representational troupes in terms, of metaphor, allegory, and irony. The works of George Lukacs, Foucault, Derrida give us a vivid idea of the processes of regulations and force by which "cultural hegemony reproduces itself, pressing even pottery and spirit into administration and the commodity form" (Said 368).

Naipaul makes use of the aesthetic structures which are adaptations of the English ones in order that the reality becomes accessible to the creative imagination. In this respect, i.e., in the Third World artist's drawing upon English aesthetic structures in order to satirize the impact of the colonial encounter, the colonial writer is seen to be a mimic lacking roots. While the colonial writer finds these alien aesthetic structures mimetically adequate, he finds them morally disquieting as is expressed by Naipaul's constant shuffling between fiction and non-fiction, satire and farce, comedy and mimesis, etc.

Naipaul's adaptation of the Western critical standards and literary traditions does not blind him to the fact that the westerners have been misleading the non-westerners in assessing them and their societies. It is interesting to see that as the non-Western world started in the postwar period to emulate the success of the West, many Western intellectuals took a negative stance towards their society which made them suspend their usual critical standards of competency when they viewed the people, institutions, and politics of the Third World. In his works Naipaul

reserves the most savage treatment for Europeans who use the political and social conditions of the developing nations to play out acts of psychic or political revenge for real or imagined wrongs they have experienced in their own society, as is evident in his handling of the characters Bobby, Jane, Yvette, and so on. Naipaul is angry with them for teaching the non-westerner the wrong lesson and for giving him the wrong cue.

Naipaul has been admired both for his brilliance in creating characters as well as in defining his peopled world with absolute precision. But he has also been seen to be lacking in tenderness in his ironic accounts. While Gordon Rohlehr considers Naipaul's irony as something that "enables him to examine his past without any sentimental self-indulgence"(139), William Walsh views it as "the agent of mediation between experience and vision" (76). But many of his own countrymen like George Lamming charge Naipaul with being ashamed of his own cultural background and condemn him for denigrating it and taking refuge in the defensive despair of a master culture (25). But according to Kenneth Ramchand, this long disfavour and hostility shown by the West Indian critics is motivated by the ideological passion of romantic nationalism rather than by a genuine understanding of Naipaul's artistic methods. To Ramchand, Naipaul as a writer essentially responds to a contemporary human situation. Hena-Maes Jelinek affirms the fact that Naipaul's fictional work is complemented by his historical works such as, for instance, *The Loss of El Dorado*. If his novels describe the shipwreck of individuals seeking to assert themselves through an independent will and to create the necessary order and opportunity for self-fulfilment in a world of dereliction and artfulness, the vision of radiance and harmony of an El Dorado that is out of reach is always implicit in his novels: "In retrospect it is even possible to see that, all the characters of Naipaul's novels form a long gallery of 'mimic men' whether we think of Ramsumair *The Mystic Masseur*, of Harbans in *The Suffrage of Elvira*, or of all those who achieve a fake success in the secondhand world. When his characters are genuine, they are inevitably failures, and not even tragic ones because there can be no tragedy in society which, in the author's worlds, denies itself heroes.

Naipaul's *The Loss of El Dorado*, which is about the search for a cultural and national identity, frees itself from the "catastrophic idolatry and blindness to one's own historical and philosophical conceptions and misconceptions which may bind one within a statuesque present or a false future" (Wilson 36). *The Loss of El Dorado* end at the point of the Black revolution where C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* takes up the story. It is a history based upon the principles of severe and imaginative

reconstruction. It favours a more corporate sense of history and tradition even by blurring the borderline between fiction and fact. It minimizes an individualistic interpretation of the past. In other words, like Naipaul's non-fiction and Peter Abraham's *Wild Conquest*, and to a lesser extent, Ngugi's *The River Between*, it is a recreation of the significant past which unfolds the cultural commitment of the Third World writer to a search for identity and self-discovery, and for an order which seems to elude societies in the throes of subversive change.

Naipaul's awareness of the failure of civilizations to renew the springs of passion within himself as a writer in search of his own roots comes from his own view of Indian society, and the immense passivity he discovers in this area of darkness that does not respond even to the touch of anger. Thus "Naipaul's complexity of feeling as a homeless and stateless individual carries him to heights of detachment from which he surveys the 'wounded' civilization with a comic irony that blends Swiftian horror of the known with Kafkaesque terror of the unknown" (Rao 205).

Comparing Naipaul and Narayan as comic artists, D.V.K. Raghavacharyulu finds that in Naipaul's work the clock of the novel is not always "wound up to a higher potential of human awareness acting beyond the sensuous cognition of people and their affairs in the machinery of life" (1). He further considers Naipaul's comic wit which he uses to present the chaotic reality behind the human situation as harsh, anguished, and isolative. The use of this in Naipaul's accounts of the Third World has an especial force in its unraveling of the layers of disorder and disharmony.

Western critics, on the other hand, express their admiration for the 'needle-like precision' of Naipaul's 'literary acupuncture' and his total detachment from painful self-lacerating accounts. William Walsh places him in the great tradition of the English novel by virtue of his double discernment. Francis Wyndham observes that Naipual writes within the great tradition of the humanist novel, as is clear from *A House for Mr. Biswas* which is as subtle and comprehensive an analysis of the colonial situation as anything in imaginative literature. He discerns the qualities of sympathy and detachment in Naipanl's measured observation of people and events and appreciates his capacity to blend the mystery of the past with the immediacy of personal experience (81).

Naipaul's own conception of the novel is that fiction should concern itself with the condition of man in response to the here and now. Discussing Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Naipaul says that the responsible novelist should communicate a sense of the assessment of the human situation without imposing a vision of the world: "He does not impose a vision on the world. He accepts, he might even make romantic,

but he invariably ends by assessing men at their own valuation. The time comes when he is content to communicate the egoism of the brute (107).

Quite in line with this, Naipaul presents a realistic view of the particulars of society and human personality where this 'egoism of the brute' rules. His satirical attack at this ingrained barbarism in civilization nevertheless implies the value of civilized human pride. All his characters from Ganesh to Jimmy Ahmed and Willie Chandran represent different kinds of egoism that define their cultural as well as psychological conditioning. Naipaul never yields to the temptation of simplifying the complexity of life but presents the ambiguity and uncertainty of human lives without indulging in "a gratuitous display of pettiness." In his "Foreword" to *The Middle Passage* he writes:

> The novelist works towards conclusions of which he is often unaware; and it is better that he should. To analyze and decide before writing would rob the writer of the excitement which supports him during his solitude and would be the opposite of my method as a novelist. I also felt it as a danger that, having factually analyzed the society as far as I was able, I would be unable afterwards to think of it in terms of fiction and that in anything I might write I would be concerned only to prove a point. However I decided to take the risk. (6)

In exploring the societies and cultures which have neither the advantage of a usable past, nor of a secure present, Naipaul has succeeded in carving a niche for himself in the English literary world. For an exile, life can always have a certain alienated majesty and thus enable him to maintain the balance between artistic distance and human commitment. He combines the accuracy of fact with the objectivity of psychological insight to furnish a coherent view of the human predicament in all its paradoxes and contradictions. The world-view he presents is neither pessimistic nor sycophantically optimistic, but is a necessary reminder of the truth about individuals and societies. Being himself a complex of identities-Caribbean, Asian, and Hindu, secular, cosmopolitan, humanistic, and ruthlessly honest, detached, ironic in art—Naipaul has created a literary canon which is quite imaginative and touching to the contemporary world. He does it all with an understanding that goes beyond any rhetoric. Creative detachment promotes a wider view of man and his destiny as it rises above common emotions, nostalgic memories, and mimetic aspirations in his own development as an artist. Naipaul goes far beyond the novel of manners which is limited by its penance on the perceptions of human oddity, absurdity, and eccentricity, towards writing about a whole experience which "has been a great effort, [which] has required greater and greater understanding of the world, greater growing up" (Naipaul 878).

Naipaul's analysis of the social culture in his novels can be characterized in terms of the distinction which Margaret Mead makes in her book *Culture and Commitment*. She identifies three types of social culture—post-figurative, co-figurative, and prefigurative. The third category called prefigurative refers to a culture where the pace of change is so extensive that all established patterns of culture lose their relevance by the time they are established. The world as Naipaul reconstructs it in his fiction, is one which, viewed from this scheme is increasingly prefigurative. Naipaul in his fiction concerns is renewing a kind of novel in those cultures where his search for a sense of identity and the need to establish a past on which the present can properly stand has a special force and cogency. It is in this respect that Naipaul's *India: A Million Mutinies Now* is significant. If *An Area of Darkness* was a rediscovery of his Indian ancestry, *India: A Million Munitues Now* is the epitome of a new technique where he uses people's voices, their personal stories, their own witness in order to give us a chain of voices that illustrate every phase of Indian life. From a vision of the past as a wound, Naipual carries three conflicting and at times interacting components in his personality of being a Trinidad colonial, an English metropolitan, and a person of Indian ancestry. He thus moves in his self-exploration towards a new restoration and vision of wholeness. As Naipaul confronts India in this work, he visualizes a more whole world than a mere country. There is a growing compassion and a wish to understand that are stronger in Naipaul's writing now. This compassionate narrative vision enables Naipaul to capture the theme of India collapsing, mutinying, and reaching after a final integration. It is his ability to look for this sense of life in a mutinous spirit order that is a significant aspect of his writing.

> What the mutinies were also helping to define was the strength of the general intellectual life, and the wholeness and humanism of the values to which all Indians now felt they could appeal. And—strange irony—the mutinies were not to be wished away. They were part of the beginning of a new way for many millions, part of India's growth, part of its restoration. (518)

In this work Naipaul moves towards the recognition of pervasive centres of cultural transmission assuring a semblance of continuity, coherence, and harmony even in the midst of apparent chaos. While the million mutinies is a significant symbol of the dawn of a post-colonial society, *A Way in the World* is work in which Naipaul arrives at a truer and more natural way of dealing with reality.

In this book, he recreates the Third World environment in all its vividness through an interplay of associations—the landscape as well as the mindscape—thus giving an artistic and inventive aura even to

historical and factual themes. He has given us a vivid sense of an order in reality through a portrayal of the reality, but not the perception of an order of reality. In real life also Naipaul is not conclusive so is the case with his works. As a person he has overcome the concerns about roots and identities. But his fictional works portray this process of overcoming. As such his major fictional works, including *Half a Life*, should be considered as portrayal of the struggles and control involved in the process of overcoming and perceiving the order of reality that exists in multicultural world. The perceptions may not be important, the struggles are important. 'Journey without maps' is more important than any thing else. In an interview to Dileep Padgaonkar (18 July, 1993 *TOI*) Naipaul said "Education and freedom enable you to get away from concerns about roots and identities. I can carry all my history in my head, all my travels. No body really live in a single culture...."

This probably is the fundamental key to survival in a world of multiculturalism as reflected in the major novels of Naipaul. And this apparently seems to be enigmatic.

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22

The Voice in Svetlana Alexievich's *The Voices of Chernobyl*: An Ecofeministic Study

Dr. Biswanath Das

There is a saying, "If you neglect your e-mail and your female, you are likely to face trouble." Female here, may stand for female in general and e-mail may stand for all technological development in general which in other words may mean the scientific and industrial devleopment of the world. Absence of a careful attention to either may cause havoc. What to speak of nuclear hazards and industrial accidents, the spitting of tons of smoke and poisonous gasses to the delicate and life giving environment, even excruciatingly have put the earth to chok, bleed and to desperately gasp for life. If this be the condition of our earth and its environment, what can be the position of man and other animals living on it. Such suffocating situation of the environment and the patriarchal and oppressive attitude of man to woman have put both women and environment on one footing. Man has two options open—either to prevent or perish. Such a situation has given rise to the study of the problems of women and environment together known as ecofeminism. The focus of the paper is recently Nobel Prize Winner book, documentation of 'oral history'. *The Voices of Chernobyl* (1997) written by Svetlana Alexlevich. The book records not only the incomprehensile human misery in miniature but also the misery of the globe in a broad form arising not of a nuclear accident, the situation no way less significant than a war if fought. Before comeing to the point, a glimpse of the concept of ecofeminisim will better carry the purpose.

Ecofeminisim is a social and political movement that tries to combine both environmentalism and feminism. There have been a lot of movements

to liberate environment and women with an objective to radically change and renew society. Ecofeministic philosophy recognizes and analyzes the connection between behaviours that oppresses woman and the behaviour that harms the environment. There are different types of ecofeminism which focus on areas such as overhanding of national resources and environmental pollution, colonization, class struggle, racism and so on. As the area of feminism is quite diverse, so there are different feminist philosophies like liberal feminism, radical feminism, cultural feminism, socialist feminism, ecofeminism and social feminism—each one of these varieties of feminism has some philosophical foundations. Ecofeminism has some philosophical foundations. Ecofeminism has grown since 1970, blending and furthering activism of both feminist theory and ecological perspective. Its explores the links between patriarchal society and environmental destruction. Svetlana's *The Voices of Chernobyl* is a remarkable milestone in exploring man's dominating attributes to control over the earth through expansion of nuclear programmes and the colossal destruction of environment through such programmes. Mother earth is a home for all human beings, animals, plants and creatures. It provides food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe. Man's existence is impossible without these. Wars are fought, people suffer eventuality; people chop down plants, suffer the suffocation; but the matter that is linked up with nuclear hazard is something different. The effects of unseen radiation is not simply closed. The effect goes on from one place to the other from one to thousands and thousands of people, animals and birds from generation to generation goes on. Svetlana records the feelings and emotions of the victims of Chernobyl nuclear accident for ages.

Swetlana Alexievich who is aged about 67, born to a Belarusuan father and Ukrainian Mother, is the 14th woman to win the Nobel Prize for literature now lives in Minsk in Belarus. She is a croniclar of history—a history of different kind "not of events but of emotions" as stated in the preface. A journalist by profession but a literatus by habbit, writes with fineness, and poetic and dramatic sensibility. Though she writes in Russian she has been published in 19 countries and five have been translated into English. Out of her important publications which included *War's Unwomanly Face* (1985), *Zinky Boys, Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War* (1989), *Enchanted with Death* (1993).

The Voices of Chernobyl (1997), won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2015 for documenting and mapping Soviet Union over a period of three decades after Union's collapse. The book is the first one that presents the personal accounts of the tragedy of Chernobyl nuclear power plant that contaminated as many as three quarters of Europe. The book originally written in Russian was translated into English by Keith Gessen in 2005.

The book is a "shocking account of lives in a poisoned world. And what quintessentially human stories these are as each distinct voice expresses anger, fear, ignorance, stoicism, valour, compassion and love. Alexievich puts her own health at risk to gather materials and frontline testimonials, which she has transacted into a hunting and essential work of literature that one can only hope in a document of nuclear repeated catastrophe".

The largest technical disaster took place on 26 Apr., 1986. Series of explosions destroyed the reactor in the building that housed Energy Block of Chernobyl Nuclear power station. For that tiny Belarus it was a potential disaster. The Belaruskaya Entsiklopedia recently views that the catastrophic effect of the disaster in the way that During the Second World War, the Nazis destroyed 619 Belarusian villages along with their inhabitants. As a result of Chernobyl, the country lost 485 villages and settlements of then 70 have been forever buried underground. During the war, one out of every four Belarusian's was killed, today, one out of every five Belarusian lives on contaminated land. This amounts to 2.1 million people, of whom 7,00,000 are children. Among the demographic factors responsible for the depopulation of Belarus, radiation is number one. In the Goweland Mogiler regions, which suffered the most from Chernobyl, mortality rates exceeded birth rates by 20 per cent.

As a result of the accident, 50 million radionuclides were released into the atmosphere, seventy per cent of then descended in Belarus, fully 23 per cent of its territory got contaminated, 4.8 per cent of Ukaraine and 0.5 per cent territory of Russia got contaminated, 26 per cent of all forests and a large part of all Marshes near River were considered part of the radioactive Zone, As a result of the perpetual presence of small doses of radiation, the number of people with cancer, mental retardation, neurological disorders and genetic mutations increased.

Sakhrov International College on Radioecology in an article "The Consequences of e Chernobyl Accidert in Belarus" points out that "on April, 29 1986, instructions recorded high levels of radiation in Poland, Germany, Austria and Romania on April 30 in Switzerland and northern Italy. On May 1 and 12, in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and northern Grece. On May 3 in Israil, Kuwait and Turkey, Moscow. Airborne particles travelled around the globe. On May 2 they were registered in Japan, on May 5 in India, on May 5 and 6 in USA and Canada. It took less than a week for Chernobyl to become a problem for the entire world.

In addition to mapping the colossal effect, she vehemently criticizes the patriarchal attitude of the Russian Government which outlaws criticism of the event. She is very straight forward in pointing finger at

the government when she mentions "Parliament approved legislation to make it a crime to recognize protest, join banned organizations or speak against the national interest" (Alexievich 3).

Svetlana recounts the voices and feelings of the people she has met and interviewed in a very touching and monolornic manner. In the prologue "A Solitary Human Voice", she recounts her first interview with Lyndmilla Ignatenko, the newly married pregnant wife of a fireman whose brigade was the first to arrive at the reactor. She gives the vivid picture of the XXX how she was kept away from her husband as her husband was one of the fire fighters in the affected area and was sent to special Hospital in Mosco which resulted in the death of her child. XXX

The process of unnatural and premature death of her husband and the total degeneration of the husband's very skin in the week before his death would create horror in the mind. She counts her love for her husband and love for death in equal measures. Her monologue reads.

> "I don't know what I should talk about...about death or about love? Or they the same? which one should I talk about? We were newly weds...we lived in the dormitory of the fire house where he worked.... One night I heard a noise. I looked...he saw me...close the window and go back to sleep. There's a fire at the reactor. I'II be back soon...everything was radiant. The hole sky. A flame and a smoke. The heat was awful. And he is still not ... they were in their shirt sleeves.... No one told them. They had been called for a fire...four O'clock. Five, six...seven O/ clock. At seven I was teld he was in the hospital...I saw him. He was all swollen and fuffed up. You could barely see his eyes.... At them the camera man died.... He was the first...get out of here go...leave...save the baby...I could not get into the hospital, ... It was a hospital for people with acute radiation poisoning, Fourteen days. In fourteen days a person dies."
>
> XXXXX There's a fragnant of some conversation, I'm remembering it. Someone is saying: "You have to understand: this is not your husband any more, not a beloved person, but a radioactive object with a strong destiny of poisoning. You are not suicidal. Get a hold of yourself.... My husband is dying ca my parents. (Alexievich 5-20)

Another lady recounts he experiences of attending a Chernobyl victim patient in the hospital and says,

> "He was producing stool 25 to 30 times a day with blood and mucus. His skin started cracking on his arms and legs. He became covered with boils. When he turned his head, there would be a clump of hair left on the pillow...soon they cut at their hair. I did nit for him myself. I wanted to do everything for him myself.... I would have stayed with

him all twenty four hours. I could not spare a minute. My brother came and got scared".

Not only physical suffering was there, people had to lose their houses and everything as all radio active objects were destroyed and being buried very deep under the ground. The another recent, "His house, it was the size of the whole village. Oh, I felt so bad, and my blood boiled, when they tare it down. They buried it. The officer was yelling: "Don't think of it, give me! It's on a hot-spot."

For a long period Chernobyl was like a signal. If anyone visited Chernobyl, everyone turns their head to look—he is from there. A father who has lost his daughter because of the disaster, recounts "Once a year you go on vacation. There you are a normal person. A little person. You'll just like everyone else—you go to work, you return from work. You get an average salary. And then one day you're turned into a Chernobyl person, an animal that everyone's interested in, and that no one knows anything about you want to be like everyone else, and now you can't. People look at you differently. They asks you: was it seary? How did the station burn? And, you know, can you have children? Did your wife leave you? At first we were all turned into animals" (31).

Some of the interviews are macabre. Viktor Verzhikovskiy, head of the Khoyniki Society of Volunteer Hunter and Fishermen, recalls his meeting with the regional party bosses a few months after the explosion. They explained that the Zone of Exclusion, as the Soviets termed the land within thirty kilometers of the Chernobyl power plant, though evacuated of humans, was still filled with household pets. But the dogs and cats had absorbed heavy doses of radiation in their fur, and were liable, presumably, to wander out of the Zone. The hunters had to go in and shoot them all. Several other accounts, particularly those about the 'deactivation' of the physical landscape in the Zone—the digging up of earth and trees and houses and their (haphazard) burial and nuclear waste—also have this quasi-Gogolian feel to them: they are ordinary human activities gone terribly berserk.

Even the most desperate cases are still very much part of this 'world of people', with its people problems and people worries.

Valentina Parasivic's husband who was a liquidator tells her:

"When I die", he succumbs to cancer several years after his stint at Chernobyl, "sell the car and the spare tire. And don't marry Tolik." Tolik is his brother. Valentina does not marry him.

The long effects of the Chernobyl can be imagined from the words of the translator of the book Keith Gessen who is of the opinion that "On September, 11, 2001, after the first hijacked plane hit the World Trade

Centre, emergency triage stations were setup throughout New York City. Doctors and nurses rushed to their hospitals for extra shifts and many individuals came to donate blood. These were touching acts of generosity and solidarity. The shocking thing about them was that the blood and triage stations turned out to be unnecessary. There were few survivors of the collaose of the two towers. (But) the effects of the explosion and nuclear fire at the Chernobyl Power Plant in 1986 were the exact opposite. The initial blast killed just one plant worker, Valariy Khodomchuk, and in the next few weeks more than thirty workers and firemen died from acute radiation poisoning. But tens of thousands received extremely high doses of radiation—it was an accident that produced, in a way, more survivors then victims (Svittam IX).

The plot construction of the document is systematic and well planned to raise her voice against oppression on nature. Like Jonathan Swift who in his book *Gulliver's Travels* mimics degeneration of human values from four different angles, Svetlana divides her document in three parts: Part-I—The Land of the Dead, Part-II The Land of the Living and Part-III—Amzed by Sadness. By that way she in a comprehensive way brings to surface the inadequate attention given to such radioactive and highly poisonous materials for industrial purpose. She raises her voice in spite of the fact anti-communistic idea in Soviet Union was very much crushed. Svetlana in the epilogue cites examples horror in the mind of the people while collecting their views. An officer standing next to her says "if some one were to step on this Italian Mine that you says is so pretty it looks like a Christmas decoration, there would be nothing left of them but a bucket of meat". Svetlana, winding up her views in the course of collecting materials says "For three years I rode around and asked people: the workers at the nuclear plant, the scientists, the former party, bureaucrats, doctors, soldiers, helicopter pilots, minors, refugees, resellers. They all had different facts and professions and temperaments. But Chernobyl was the main content of their world. They were ordinary people answering the most important questions. These people had already seen what for everyone else is still unknown, I felt that I was recording the future" (Svetlana 236).

To conclude, 'Prakriti' and 'Purush', man and woman are complementary to each other: One finds meaning with the presence of the other. But is has been the primordial interest of man to control over woman and the earth as the sovereign authority, as a result of which nature like woman is oppressed to the maximum, The beautiful environment of man living gets poisoned. Living on earth is as suffocating as in a gas chamber. Not man alone, plant, birds, animals and creatures gasp for life. The nuclear power plants and accidents causing out of it, may harm life

not of the earth at present but the earth for future time to come. It may contaminate through air, water, food, vegetation and in every possible ways. No respite. *The Voice of Chernobyl*, is a worth mentioning record of human misery and environmental poisoning that may aware people the effects of such disaster. Many are aware of the serpentine risk present in such use of radioactive elements in which man and environment are always at risk. The collective voice of Chernobyl is a voice of protest of Svetlana Alexievich in which the voices of many are involved.

23

Social Awareness and Subaltern Predicament in Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* and Girish Karnad's *Tale-Danda*

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Abstract

Vijay Tendulkar's short play *Kanyadaan* deals with a sensitive social and political issue. As we all know Dalits suffer a lot many years in the hands of upper caste people of the society. Tendulkar in this play expounds entirely different aspect which shows the suffering of an upper caste woman and her family in the hands of a Dalit educated and uneducated young men. Like Vijay Tendulkar Girish Karnad also exhibits the aforesaid problem in his play *Tale-Danda*. In *Tale-Danda* Karnad has described the panges of Dalits due to exploitation in the hands of upper caste people and Nath Devalalikar and Seva in *Kanyadaan* know that there is nothing but marriage can dilapidate the pillar of the edifice of caste system as the institution of marriage is unique in the caste based society of India. Hindus give utmost priority to marriage. They take everything, for instance caste, character, occupation, economic status, etc., into consideration. Of all these things caste of the bride and the bridegroom should be the same. If anyone of the above is not good usually marriage doesn't take place. Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* and Karnad's *Tale-Danda* evolve around the marriage of Jyoti and Kalavati respectively. Jyoti belongs to urban middle class Brahmin family and her father Nath is an MLA, who is a social worker, is always busy in social service. Jyoti has decided to marry Arun. Her father agrees at once because his dream is casteless society and for that he has been working. Her mother Seva is shocked. Even though she has been fighting against 'untouchability' she does not feel like going with her daughter's decision. Like Nath and Seva

Kakayya and Madhuvarsa are excited to see their children in the knot of the marriage. Unlike them Bijjala and Basavanna are conscious of the reaction of the upper caste people.

Karnad is very keen and sensitive in his observation of life, society and the universe has always a definite message to convey through his plays. Girish Karnad has raised lots of basic burning questions related to the crisis of human values in the society. Individual's relations with individual, family, society and state have been examined. It is displayed through his plays that even in society there is no justice and quality. But being a social human being everybody is bound to live in society and accept the social values no matter if these are unbearable and need changes. Sometimes we find that some honest social values remove all colour and joys from the lives of human beings. Consequently, not only does Basavanna's movement fail but also his followers emerge as a new caste as 'lingayat' after a few hundred years.

Keywords: Lingayat, Social resurrection, Untouchability, Pragmatism, Fundamentalism.

Girish Karnad and Vijay Tendulkar have keen observer of society and its ideals. Both sail on the same boat but with the little differences. Karnad has expounded that profound social awareness has crept into the community of downtrodden. The marginalized section of the society is seen on constant search for identity and in doing so how they suffer is *prime facie* of Karnad's *Tale-Danda*. Unlike Karnad's *Tale-Danda,* Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* highlights life of a Brahmin girls named Jyoti with her family in the hand of an educated man named Arun. We get a glimpse of the psychology of Arun who represents an educated man of low birth due to meeting the predicaments in the way of his life. Tendulkar reveals his anger and protest against the Jyoti's family who represents the upper class of society. Arun experienced that people of the upper class tightly hold the social values and exploit them. In Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* there are only seven characters but they have depicted the social and political concerns. Vijay Tendulakar obtained the Saraswati Samman for this play *Kanyadaan*. It is taken as anti-Dalit play. The playwright met the anger of the audience in the form of Chappal throwing when it was staged.

The present paper intends to highlight the social awareness among the marginalized. *Tale-Danda* describes the struggle of the Sharanas who pine to bring change in the social values. Values are considered equipments of any society which help in attaining spiritual and material betterment of its people smoothly. Girish Karnad has genuine existential concerns. He has portrayed urgent human predicament, freedom of choice, selfhood, and search for identity, isolation, frustration and failures. He is very

conscious to restore the dignity of man on the whole human relationship. The King of Kalyan Bijjala of *Tale-Danda* is a barber by caste, gives up his caste and becomes Sharan. Dalit characters—the king Bijjala himself, Sheelavanta, Basavanna, etc., are well acquainted with the fury of the upper class people in their companies. Basavanna, Kakkya, Madhuvarsa and other Sharanas in *Tale-Danda* are conscious of their existence and are adamant to remove the social obstacles due to those they are marginalized. *Tale-Danda* explicates how badly social deformity has shaken the society and human beings through the characters Bijjala and Basavanna as it is replete with social problems depicting the twelfth century communal struggle in the city of Kalyan in North Kanara. Massive social discrepancies are highlighted through the story of Bijjala, the king of Kalyan and Basavanna, king's officer. Both unite to eradicate the social deformity due to that people are maltreated and treated superior and inferior. Being a grime social issue social deformity with its all perspectives is well dealt in Karnad's *Tale-Danda*. The ugly scenario of the caste system in India is exposed in this play. Most of people accept it and observe the customs that sustain it. Moreover, state protects it with military force. Thus Karnad exposes the evil effects of social deformity at cultural, social, political and psychological levels by spreading social awareness among the marginalized people. Karnad says: "you can perceive deep irony, because, after all the martyrdom of the Sharanas, when they re-emerged after three centuries of underground survival as lingayats, they were totally caste-redden" (76).

The king Bijjala, Sheelavanta, Basavanna, Kakkya, Madhuvarsa and other Sharanas in *Tale-Danda* are determined to bring social equality and healthy social system with little discrimination based on caste and religion. The protagonist Basavanna in the play *Tale-Danda* is in the favour of mingling of all castes. But as a foresighted person, he knows the consequence of breaking the caste system. That's why he floats his ideas of wedding proposal of Sheelavanta, a cobbler by birth with Kalavati, a Brahmin girl. Basavanna deliberately says to Madhuvarsa and Haralayya in serious way, "The orthodox will see this mingling of castes as a blow at the very roots of Varnashrama dharma. Bigotry has not faced such a challenge in two thousand years. I need hardly describe what venom will gush out, what hatred will erupt once the news spreads" (38). Basavanna wants to uproot such caste-system due to that they are bound to suffer immensely. Sharanas before being Sharanas they have experienced the social hindrance in the way of their lives so they do not hold caste system longer, they treat equally. Sharanas believe in this. In the words of Kakkayya, "There is no caste among Sharanas, neither Brahmin, nor cobbler" (38). Following this religion Bijjala became King and marries

with a Kshatriya girl Rambhavati. This incident has changed story of his entire life. Now he feels pride getting himself on the throne of the king. Being on the throne he is ready to give any sacrifice for sharanas with the help of whom he became the king of Kalyan. So he joins their hands in uprooting the patriarchal social system. *Tale-Danda* shows the need of new religion in which all should be treated equally and humanly. It will be apt to quote Tagore, his female character Prakriti of *Chandalika* (1933) says, "A religion that insults is a false religion" (Tagore 154). Karnad gives new doses and fresh outlook to set beliefs and rooted religious faiths. Basavanna is well acquainted with the fact that Sharanas' mission to eradicate caste system will meet furies of people of upper caste. He expounds:

> Some say this edifice of caste and creed, this poison-house of varnashram, will come tumbling down. Every person will see himself only as a human being. As a bhakta. As a Sharana. That is inevitable. But we have a long way to go. You know the most terrible crimes have been justified in the name of sanatana religion. (38-39)

Hence, above is more than sufficient to show the objective of Sharana. Behind the whole story there are social discrepancies.

As far as obstacle and predicament in the lower class people are concerned, it can be stated that despite being competent they are deprived of opportunities to make their career which is prime and necessary thing to lead a meaningful life. But fact reveals that they are exploited and oppressed in the hand of people of upper class. All the old customs, discrimination regarding caste, class and gender have been the root causes of problems and pitiable condition of low class people. Exploitation and oppression have become a natural norm in our society as it has absorbed and observed individualism and competition. Consequently everybody takes inequality for granted. Steiner aptly points out, "The difficulty which we have in feeling equality with all other human beings is the result in part of our banal training in competitiveness and individualism" (187). He later talks about the dehumanizing effect of competition: "In our mad scramble to the top we forget how to love how to think, and we lose track of who we are and what we really want" (*Ibid.*). Marx also comments on the evil effects of the division of labour and social deformity: "It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour, the concentration of capital and land in a few hands: over-production and crises" (187). The social deformity of Hindu society has not changed for ages. Even in the modern age men of low birth are bound to face atrocities.

Mulk Raj Anand and Bhabani Bhatacharya in Indian English fiction, Badal Sircar and Mohan Rakesh in Indian English drama, Girish

Karnad is concerned with social discrimination lying in Indian society and exposes the adverse effect of caste and class in his *Tale-Danda*. Despite being king Bijjala tolerates the blow given by the upper class people without protesting. He expresses her trauma to his wife being upset having seen the unprincely behaviour of Sovideva, his son. He says:

> In all my sixty-two years, the only people who have looked me in the eye without a reference to my lowly birth lurking deep in their eyes are the Sharanas: Basavanna and his men. They treat me as—as what?—(*Almost with a sense of wonder.*) as a human being. Basavanna wants to eradicate the caste structure, wipe it off the face of the earth. Annihilate the Varna system. What a vision! And what prodigious courage! And he has the ability. Look at those he has gathered around him: poets, mystics, visionaries. And nothing airy—fairy about them, mind you. All hard-working people from the common stock. They sit together, eat together, argue about God together, indifferent to caste, birth or station. And all this is happening in the city of Kalyan—my Kalyan! (15)

In *Tale-Danda* marriage is expounded as a prime cause of the ruin of Bijjala and Basavanna including other Sharanas. Marriage of Sheelavanta, a Dalit and Kalavati, a Brahamin girl is a significant event as in this context both psychological and social deformity are dexterously displayed. Sharanas' speculation prior to the marriage and their eagerness to live the life in accordance to principles of Sharana are heart touching. Along with fear of Basavanna also it finds its shape. When he expresses his apprehension: "It's a question of life and death for their children. From tomorrow the wrath of bigoted will pursue them like swarm of snakes. To strike as they pause to put up a roof or light on oven" (38). For the sake of Sharana's ideal Kakkyya and Madhuvarsa give their consent with the little hesitation. Both along with others can foresee the consequence of this knot. Even Basavanna and his wife Gangambika can feel the result of inter-caste marriage. But Madhuvarsa is so eager to dilapidate the edifice of caste system. When he finds that doing the marriage of her daughter Kalavati with a Dalit boy Sheelavanta he can show his loyalty and dedication to Sharana's ideals, he thinks to accomplish soon. Basavanna exhibits the deepness of social system:

> Until now it was only a matter of theoretical speculation. But this-this is real. The orthodox will see this mingling of castes as a blow at the very roots of varnashrama dharma. Bigotry has not faced such a challenge in two thousand years. I need hardly describe what venom will gush out, what hatred will erupt once the news spreads. (38)

Madhuvarsa is not happy with this inter-caste marriage and sacrifice word comes out of her mind, "Then let me say this: I shall not sacrifice my daughter's life to forward the cause of our movement". At his remark Kakkya does not delay to take his step back, "The word 'sacrifice' strikes terror in me. Too long have my people sacrificed our women to the greed of the upper castes, our sons to their cosmic theories of rebirth. No more sacrifices, please" (39). Their conversation shows the status of social deformity. Deserted section of the society is too badly crushed to stand on their feet. Sheelavanata himself does not agree for this marriage. Reason, no need to mention. In the pathetic voice he says, "I don't want to hurt her. Don't want to ruin her life. They'll tease her tomorrow, call her a cobbler's priestess" (40). Further adds saying, "No sir, no one. But— Kalavati can't stand the smell of leather. I've seen her. Whenever she passes a cobbler's shop she holds her nose. Will she spend her whole life like that?" Sheelavanata's opinion is worth to speculation as children are not for experiment. To satiate own ideology one should not stake their children. Finding Sheelavanata in accordance to her opinion Lalita too expresses her fear, "I have been silent all along. I can't be any longer. Sheela is a gem. You won't find another boy like him in all the Brahmin areas! But what he says is true" (40). How beautifully Karnad has evinced the fear of the upper and lower class! To show the ferocious face of the social deformity Karnad has revealed the truth through his character Lalita that despite being rather talented and deserving creatures of low birth are not accepted in the society. It does not stop here, they are not permitted to live their lives on their own terms. Lalita takes Sheela as a gem but not ready to accept him as a partner to her daughter. Hence, Karnad has exposed the evil effects of social deformity at cultural, social and psychological levels.

Bijjala himself is aware of the social deformity but knows that inter-caste marriage will raise communal violence. Bijjala knows that the act will paralyse the life of Kalyan. So he manages for their security so that no bloodshed should happen. Finally in tight security marriage takes place. This marriage raises the anger of Hindus. Damodara Bhatta and Manchanna go against their king and show their acceptance to Savideva as king in place of real king. Following the advice of Damodara Sovideva persecutes the Sharanas violently and mercilessly. Unfortunately Basavanna was not with the Sharanas and they lose heart and go helter-skelter. On the advice of Manchanna Sovideva gets all the sharanas decimated without any discrimination. Due to this incident Jagadeva and other sharanas are enraged. So they decide to avenge on Sovideva. They secretly enter the palace but do not find prince inside. In frustration Jagadeva along with the Sharanas enter the inner temple of Lord Shiv where Bijjala embraces the 'Linga' to protect himself. But Jagadeva

betrays him saying that they are sent by Basavanna. Hearing the name of Basavanna he comes out and Jagadewa stabs him to death and after killing him he kills himself. On this incident Sovideva's anger does not leave even Damodara. On his order his guard cut the cord of Domodara's life. Sovideva's instruction regarding the Sharana depicts his detest towards them:

> Pursue them. Don't let them escape. Men, women, children-cut them all down. Set the hounds after them. Search each wood, each bush. Burn the houses that give them shelter. Burn their books. Yes, the books! Tear them into shreds and consign them to the wells. Their voices shall be stilled forever—. (90)

Second play to be examined is Vijay Tendulakar's *Kanyadaan* which exhibits social deformity indirectly and directly. It describes the psychological aspect of lower caste man. The whole play evolves around the marriage especially inter-caste marriage. The institution of marriage is unique in the caste based society of India. Jyoti, the daughter of Nath Devalikar, an MLC, who maintains democracy at home, and Seva, a social worker, has freedom to chose the life partner on her own way. They belong to urban middle class Brahmin family. Nath is always on tour addressing the public, Seva is busy organizing women's camps and rallies. Both have observed the reality of low caste people, so they are seen pouring the fire against this rotten social system.

To bring the awareness among the down-trodden people they work day and night. Nath is sentimental and takes decision in hurry with little speculation on the negative side of his decision whereas Seva keeps balance between theory and practical. Her character resembles Gangambika and Madhuvarsa in *Tale-Danda* on the point of making decision. These female characters are well acquainted with the grim consequence of inter caste marriage. So they did not go with the supporter of inter-caste marriage to bring social equality. In *Kanyadaan* Tendulkar has depicted the inter-caste marriage but shows the difficulties in bringing social equality at the psychological level. Despite being conscious of the changes regarding the upliftment of the position of low caste people, they could not change their psychology and protest. That is why this play is known as anti-Dalit play containing feminism too whereas *Tale-Danda* is pure Dalit play. *Kanyadaan* advocates two modem trends—first feminism and second Dalit literature.

Vijay Tendulkar highlights marriage in the play *Kanyadaan*. Hindus give utmost priority to marriage. They take everything as caste, character, occupation, economic status, etc., into consideration. Of all these things caste of the bride and the bridegroom should be the same. If anyone of the above is not fit usually marriage doesn't take place. If it happens, it will

create problems and chaos to breakers. One critic Veena exhibits that the image of women in contemporary Indian literature has changed drastically, she observes:

> No more is women considered or portrayed as a weak person, or falling at the feet of her husband or trying to pleasure him always.... Modern writers have tried to transform this image of women as seen in the myths by portraying them in a more realistic manner. One such writer is Vijay Tendulkar. (Veena)

Marriage changes the whole life of the human beings. She decides to tie the knot of the marriage with Arun, who is a scavenger. Jyoti brings Arun to her house to introduce him to her parents and brother. He is dark complexioned but good looking. He is nervous when he enters Jyoti's house because the house is different and massive from his. He asks Jyoti not to leave him. Here the playwright artistically describes actual feelings of discomfort when Arun enters the house. Arun's words here reveal his entire background. He expounds:

> If you see my father's face you'll understand. Ten of us, big and small, lived in that eight by ten feet. The beat of our bodies to warm us in winter. No clothes on our back, no food in our stomach, but we feel very safe. Here, these damn houses of the city people, they're like the bellies of sharks and crocodiles, each one alone in them. (16)

Through the character Arun the playwright has thrown light on the living style of low caste people in which they are bound to dwell. Arun becomes more eloquent in his expression on untouchability. His words against Brahmins are full of poison which is deposited since hundred years. He asks Jyoti thinking about her problems after getting married with him:

> Will you marry me and eat stinking bread with spoilt dal in my father's hut? Without vomiting? Tell me, Jyoti, can you shit everyday in our slum's village toilet like my mother? Can you beg, quaking at every door, for a little grass for our buffaloes? Come on, tell me. (17)

These words reveal how inferior he is in his thoughts. Low caste people are used to such humiliation without little complaint owing to social ignorance. It may be because of his own circumstances he treats with Jyoti rudely. Jyoti begins to weep uncontrollably. Later Arun apologizes for being rude in his speech. Jyoti accepts and laughs when Jyoti is speaking that she is not touch me not girl he holds her arm and twists it violently. Jyoti feels the pain not because her hand is twisted but the rude behaviour of Arun. Seva sees this and does not reveal her displeasure.

This speech of Arun resembles with the famous poem of Heera Dom, written in Bhojpuri language. Which is titled as "Achut ki shikayat" and published in the magazine *Swarswati*. This poem is regarded as the first Dalit poem by Dalit poet. In the forty lines of this poem the poet presents the condition and miseries of Dalit along with religion, government and people as well as the god. Jyoti comes to hear her father on Arun's autobiography. She criticizes him for his hypocritical speech. She questions why he has come. When Nath asks her who will take care of her during delivery, Jyoti harshly replies that she has her husband. She emphasizes that she is not a widow. She firmly says that she is Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. She leaves the house saying that she never come again. Talking about the play one of the critics says:

> Jyoti thus becomes mindless and surrenders to the situation. She like her father plays the rescuer while Arun plays the victim. Her rescuing, at first, makes him behave more helplessly and then triggers his feelings of iriferiority. Consequently, he sifts to the role of persecutor in order to feel powerful.... Jyoti goes down to the role of victim. Thus the Rescuer-victim transaction. This Drama Triangle make not only Jyoti but also Arun mindless to feel powerful. The unreal idealism of Nath and Jyoti reflects their favourite role of rescuing which impairs their perception of the reality. (Sarath 73)

Jyoti, in spite of being educated girl, is forced to accept her fate as Arun's wife even though she does not like it. She comes to know that it is not possible to change people. Thus Vijay Tendulkar remarkably explores the conflict between two different castes in Indian society.

The married life of Jyoti and Arun is presented in dark light. An opportunity is given to a Dalit boy to rise up in the society but Arun is shown incapable of utilizing that chance. He cannot escape from his Dalit mentality, and life style. Though educated, his wife Jyoti has become a mere thing for him on whom he can show his love whenever he is pleased and can show his anger by beating her if he is angry. Jyoti after months returns home and declares that she has left Arun forever. She is found saying that he would not enter that house. Because she has left him and she is not going back to him again. She is fed up with him.

But it is argued that if a child gets only one-sided knowledge, if he is taught only the goodness, will he be able to cope up with the world in which he will have to live? The world is not good but full of vice and so he must be aware about it. In this manner, Mr. Nath has always taught only good lesson, faith in human being and under its effect the daughter has selected a Dalit to remove untouchability but her experiences has taught her different reality. She realizes that if she will live as a Dalit only then the distance will be crossed and her father's experiment will be

successful. Jyoti appears as a scapegoat having plunged in the river of marriage being inspired by Gandhian theory and ideology preached by her own father. Going back is not easy. At one place she reveals her panges with the realistic approach, "I am not Jyoti Yadunath Devlalikar now, I am Jyoti Arun Athavale, a scavenger. I don't say harijan. I despise the term. I am an untouchable, a scavenger. I am one of them. Don't touch me. Fly from my shadow, otherwise my fire will scorch your comfortable values."

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24

Dalit Women: Society, Literature and Marginalization

Dr. Bhujendra Singh Rathod LR

This paper deals with the issues of marginalization of women. Since the evolution of the universe the feminine category is treated as inferior, marginalized and fragile. Throughout the human history women are absolutely undermined by male dominated society. After the advancement of knowledge, people involved and opted profession of their interest for existence. Gradually oral literature came, scripts discovered, written forms slowly occupied the space and ample of experiments researched on all walks of life. In India, Sanskrit was the predominant language, the particular upper caste monopolized and started writing in their own conception and formed certain rules and regulations to govern on specific caste. The ruling caste scientifically ruled by producing false ideas in the name of God, telling that all works of literature are produced by the blessings of almighty. The self titled upper caste Brahmins created vicious Vama system in the society and made barrier between Dalit and non-Dalits.

The origin of Dalits as a clan may be traced back to the *Rigveda*, the oldest Veda of Hindus. Four Varnas are identified in ancient classics and religious literature of the Hindus. The four Varnas or castes are subdivided into many subcastes and there is a final stratum of this ethnic division known as the untouchables, the lowest of all, so impure and despicable that they stood outside the caste and social structure of the Indian people altogether. This final stratum is known as 'Oalits' in modern linguistic terminology. There is a general traditional assumption among the caste Hindus/upper caste Hindus that the Dalits did not have their own cultural institutions, arts and fine arts, etc. This paper focuses on the

presentation of information which proves that the Oalit women's exploitation, oppression and marginalization in the social structure from the Dalits and the upper castes.

The Brahmin is the first born and highest of the four Varnas or Class, as prescribed in the **Purusha Sukta** of the **Rigveda**, which constitutes society into four Vamas or Chaturvarna. He is styled the lord of universe, even equal to the God himself. He is to be worshipped, served and respected by all. Oxford dictionary defines Brahman as, "a socially or culturally superior person" (http://oxforddictionaries.com). Thus, the Brahmins are priests, the Kshetriyas are warriors, the Vaishayas are traders and the Shudras are labourers engaged in manual work. Each Varna was abided by its stipulated vocation. Brahmins are said to occupy the highest position among the four Varnas of Hinduism. Brahmin refers to the creative aspect of the universal consciousness. Brahmins were engaged in attaining the highest spiritual knowledge and adhered to different branches (shakhas) of Vedas. This culture has applied by Brahmin to the other classes in India.

Dalit in general are treated in an inhumane ways and Dalit women are marginalized even further in threefold on the basis of caste, class and patriarchy. They are even thrice oppressed victims of centuries of social, political, economic, cultural and religious pressures. They are downtrodden among the downtroddens and Oalit of Dalits in Indian society. Moreover, the Dalit women are oppressed among the oppressed and slaves of slaves. They are victims of the worst kind of patriarchy, feudalism, casteism, corruption and insensitivity of our society. She suffers in the family first because she is a woman and then she has to face the society and she is a Dalit woman. They are oppressed by the broader Hindu society, their own community's men and also their own husbands. Thus they are triply disadvantageous. After sixty seven years of independence and despite excellent laws in place to protect Dalit women, they are still suffering unimaginable atrocities of the society. Indian society has not been able to deliver justice and dignity to them. A Dalit woman is relegated to a life of inequality from the moment she is born. They are worst victims of violence, discrimination and exploitation. Specific types of work continue to be assigned to them on the basis of their hierarchical status. Certain kinds of violence are traditionally reserved for Dalit women: extreme filthy verbal abuse, sexual epithets, naked parading, dismemberment, being forced to drink urine and eat faeces, branding, pulling out teeth, tongue and nails, tied to a pole and beaten, depriving them to fetch water from well and violence including murder after proclaiming witch are experienced by Dalit women. The Devadasi, Jogini, Murali and Chira systems are the extreme form of exploitation of Dalit

women. These are the systems under which the Dalit are often required to dedicate their young girls in service of the Hindu God in a temple, which then becomes an institution of open sexual abuse resulting in sexual exploitation in the name of religion. These Dalit girls are unable to marry and instead forced to become a prostitute for temple priests and for dominant castes in the village. The government has passed a law against devdasi and similar system but it is still practiced in some states. The majority cases of violence against Dalit women are not registered. They are also unaware of the laws and their ignorance is exploited by the opponents, by the police and even the judiciary system. They do not have any control over their own bodies, earning and lives. Gender based inequality perpetuated by patriarchal power relation and intensified by caste discrimination result in structural inequality. Though, the Constitution of India guarantees all citizens basic human rights regardless of caste, creed, gender, or ethnicity in favour of Justice, Equality, Liberty, and Fraternity but the implementation and enforcement of these principles has, unfortunately, been a terrible failure. Thus they face multiple forms of discrimination, violence, and exclusion from the rest of society. Dalit women also face violence when they try to access rights and entitlements provided by the Constitution and the government.

In the context of traditional Hindu society, Dalit status has often been historically associated with occupation regarded as radically impure, such as any involving leather work, butchering or removal of rubbish, animal carcasses and waste. Dalit worked as manual labourers clean in street, latrines and sewers. Encasing in these activities was considered to be considered contagious and banned from full participation in Hindu social life. For example, they could not enter the temples, schools, hotels, upper caste houses and specific public places and were required for stay outside the village.

Women play the roles as wives, daughters, sisters, mothers, etc., in fact these roles must be obey the constructive rules systematically constructed by the male dominated society and added binary oppositions in the religious scripts. Dalit men are victims of casteism. Datit women are doubly oppressed as Dalits and as women in the society. They are penalized and brutalized not only by upper caste men but also by men of their own community. The subordinate status of women and their complete marginalization is clearly reflected in the Dalit literature. In rare cases when the women are actually given a voice or representation in Dalit men's writings, the portrayal of Dalit women in the narrative is based on conventional stereotypes.

Manusmriti says, "The wife should even treat the husband as God though he is characterless, sensual and devoid of good qualities.... If the

wife disobeys the husband when he is given to bad habits or becomes a drunkard or is suffering from physical ailment, then for three months she should be deprived of her valuable clothes and jewels and kept away.... Day and night women must be kept in dependence by the males of their families... her father protects her in childhood, her husband protects her in youth and her sons protect her in old age; a woman is never fit for independence".[1] Manu provided sole liberty to men and curtailed down the independence of women in social structure.

The History of Dalit Movement goes back to the 11th century. The first Dalit writer was Madara Chennaiah, eleventh century cobbler-saint, who lived in the reign of Western Chalukyas. He was regarded as the father of Vachana poetry, who spread equality and fraternity through his poetry. Oalit saint Kalavve, in 12th century, challenged the higher castes system and given the new theory and philosophy of equality for society. Dalit poets, saints and social reformers strived hard for the eradication of Varna system by producing ample of works to convey that the systems was only made for particular upper caste, constructed to gratify and grab the highest opportunity in the society.

Dalit literature emerged as the radical literature and challenged the norms, standards and principles of the so-called mainstream Brahminical literature, aesthetics and literary theory. Dalit literature is not the literature of mere protest or negation. It aims at dismantling the existing structures of exploitation and restructuring the global society. Started in Marathi during the seventies, Dalit literature is now being written in several Indian languages. These literatures, barring languages, do share the egalitarian ideology and expose the exploitative mechanisms latent in the Indian society. The rise of Dalit women writers in many parts of India has raised many issues pertaining to Brahminical patriarchy, Dalit male chauvinism and specificity of the Dalit women's exploitation.

More than four decades have passed since Dalit literature embarked. Though Dalit literature set new standards hitherto unknown and unpractised in world literature in general and Indian literature in particular, it had to suffer negligence and severe criticism at the hands of the mainstream. For long, Dalit literature was not translated into English. S. Anand has attempted to provide causal relationship between the emergence of Dalit literature in translation and many factors including the market.[2] In 1992, Mulk Raj Anand and Eleanor Zelliot translated Marathi Dalit poems as *An Anthology of Dalit Literature*.[3] This was the first attempt of this kind. In the same year, Arjun Dangale, one of the founding members of Dalit Panther in Maharashtra, edited *Poisoned Bread*.[4] (It was a collection of prose, autobiography, poetry, etc., after a long gap of 7 years.) *Karukku*, an autobiographical novel written by Barna in Tamil in

1992, won worldwide acclaim only after Lakshmi Holmstrom translated it to English in 2000.[5] This was followed by the publication of Laxman Mane's *Upara* as *The Outsider* in 1997[6] and Laxman Gaikwad's *Uchalya* as *The Branded*[7] in 1998 by Sahitya Akadami.

In recent times Dalit literature has become a new genre. The writers of Dalit literature have started depiction the tormenting experiences of Dalits exposed to present the contemporary social, political, economic, educational and mental conditions of Dalits before Dalit and non-Dalit readers. Mulk Raj Anand was the first writer to touch upon this genre of Dalit literature in his novels like *Coolie* and *Untouchable* in English. They are simultaneously translated into different regional and world languages. The Dalit literature is made popular in Marathi by Maharashtra Dalit Poetry. It mainly aims at creating awareness of Dalits about their social conditions in the society to all conscious readers. Thus we have a great deal of Dalit poetry in which we find the poet's expressing the violent lashing experiences of poet's life effectively. Narayan Survey was one of the most popular Dalit poets of the early Dalit literature. His famous poem was Vidhya Rath. At the same time we have other poets like Keshav Meshram's 'Utkhasian' which means excavation, 'Dayapawar' whose poem 'Kondwade' which means subbozating enclosure, Namdeo Dhyal whose poem 'Galpitha' which means the red light Zone and Triyambak Satkal whose poem 'Surang' which means Dyanamite are popular contributions in Dalit poetry. The new generation of Dalit poetry emerged in the contemporary period as a revolt or protest against the traditional oppression. We also have Dalit folk poetry practiced for propagating Dalit sensibility. Woman folk poets like Dade Kardak, Bheem Rao Kardak, Vittol Uma were the first generation Dalit folk poets. The folk poetry includes ballads, which inspired the common people of Dalit community.

Dalit writers also exploited short stories and novels to express Dalit sensibility suitably. The short stories like 'Fakira', Anna Bahu Sathi's, 'Davindi', Sankar Rao Kharat's 'Jerah Mi Jaat Charli Hoti' which means "when I robbed a caste" are good examples of short stories. Though drama is not as popular as other genres of Dalit literature, some of the Dalit play wrights have made significant contribution to develop Dalit drama. Thus M.V. Chlries' Yugyatra, Gangedhar Pantawane's *Mruthyala*, Mask, Datta Bhagat; wata oakwata, B.C. Shinde' Udavst (destroyed), Ramnath Chavan' Bamanwada (Brahmin lane) are some of the good examples Dalit plays. These short stories, poems and plays unraveled the realities of Dalit exploitation and Dalit women's plight, marginalization and vulgar treatment in and out of the Hindu social structure.

Mulk Raj Anand's novels *untouchable* and *Coolie* form an important contribution to the body of Dalit literature. The theme of *Untouchable* is the

evil of untouchability in India. Anand depicts the experiences of an 18 year old Dalit boy in the course of a single day in a town called 'Buland Shahi'. A Dalit boy's name was 'Bakha'. He works curiously and laboriously keeping the public latrines of the town clean. It exposes the Dalit boy to the content of the caste Hindu and renders him an untouchable. In this novel Anand expresses his sympathy with the Dalits in India. He wrote this to awaken the conscience of the upper caste in India. *Coolie* is a much longer novel than *Untouchable.*

Bama is a Dalit woman writer. She made a significant contribution towards the development of Dalit literature. She writes about her experiences tracing them within the contact that depicts her personal and professional life. Her identity as a Dalit, her marginalized position in the society, further increased by such aspects as her gender, class, and religion and location. She explores the multiple structures of oppression that operate in the liver of Dalits and more specifically in the lives of Dalit women of Tamil Nadu. In her novel *Karukku* Bama depicts that a girl child in Dalit community is taken as a potential source of cheap, unpaid labour. She is surrogate mother to her siblings, thereby coming to the rescue of her mother who can take up her heavy workload at the farm outside and leave the domestic responsibilities to her daughter. Dalit girls' responsibilities mostly include fetching firewood, cooking, feeding, washing, taking care or younger siblings (or) even older brother. They also include waking at the four in the afternoons in return for a couple of handful of grams or peas, running errands, working at factories (or) at farms during the period of sowing or harvesting and handing over the wages to a bullying brother (or) a drunk father. *Sangati* explores the female subjugation and subordination in a great way. Bama says about Dalit feminism in an interview: All women in the world are second class citizens. For Dalit women, the problem is grave. Their Dalit identity gives them a different set of problems. They experience a total lack of social status; they are not even considered dignified human beings. My stories are based on these aspects of Dalit culture.... The hard labour they have to do all their lives. Other problems are the same for all women. In *Breast-Giver, Kurukku* and *Sangati* Bama has focused how Dalit women consciously failed to get liberty in the patriarchal society and sarcastically condemned the male hegemonic ideas which were imposed craftily by using religious cudgel on women that further spoiled and twisted the entire life of women.

Meena Kandasamy is a poet, translator and a creative writer in Chennai. She is the first Indian woman writer, writing Dalit poetry in English. She is an emerging poet of Dalit Literature in English. She has hosted the voice of the Dalits through her work. And one can find this

'Touch' is an autobiographical poem. As a woman writer who dreams of a casteless India, she contributed quite a few books and research articles in various journals. The collection of the poems *Touch* by Meena Kandasamy depicts the suppression of Dalits in its gruesome reality. She clearly portrays her own experiences and the atrocities faced by Dalits are focused in her poems. Each poem gives a new feeling is and thought provoking about the issues that the Dalits are facing.

The works and speeches of great social reformers, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, B.R. Ambedkar and Jyotirao Phule continued to inspire the Dalits in modern world. The word Dalil has undergone a great deal of change in its meaning, scope, and application in as much as it is no longer a word which carried the meaning earlier times such as untouchable, Harijan, Downtrodden. In the present context the word 'Dalit' connotes any person subjected to exploitation, squalor, poverty, discrimination in any form that appears in society.

The Dalit men are victims of the caste-system and exploitative economy, and Dalit woman is triply marginalized by the conjoined operations of caste, class and gender. The Dalit women are the marginalized of the marginalized in the discriminatory stigma of social fabric. A woman in a Dalit community is a "Dalit among the Dalits". In spite of being far more side-lined than men, Dalit women have also contributed sufficiently to Dalit literature. Dalit women writers feel strongly that Dalit woman issues have not been adequately represented in the mainstream. Condemned for centuries to a life of bondage, basic needs and questions of survival are still central for Dalit women. To understand this 'caste-gender mechanism' is not as easy as it seems. The reality is that to be a female writer and a Dalit female writer is not one and the same. Some upper-caste feminist thinkers "... who feel that women of all communities and Dalits are both victimized and discriminated by the male chauvinists and therefore all women are Dalits! These intellectuals do not, for a moment, think of Dalits who are also women. In spite of their awareness that women are divided along caste and class lines, they comfortably draw the parity between 'women' and 'Dalits."[14]

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Shifting Perspective: From Feminism to Womanism

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Abstract

The paper attempts to bring out a very brief outline of the social, intellectual, and political movement known as 'feminism'. It will also introduce a variant form of the term feminism, referred to as 'womanism'. That 'feminism' is a complex term is a truism. Critics have opined that it should be understood as a discourse, a discussion of multiple related ideas. Recognizing the multiplicity of ideas related with the term critics have wisely preferred using the term 'feminisms' with an extra 'x'. However, whatever we talk of what feminism is, it sure is a philosophy, a way of thinking. It is based, primarily on the thinking that there always is a gender inequality between the sexes: that women traditionally has been regarded as inferior to man physically and intellectually, and that both law and theology had ordered their subjection; that women has been marginalized in every sphere of life; that everything that gives priority to the assumption of male-supremacy is based on cultural construct and its very foundation must be put into serious question. As women's experiences are varied and different, it is but inevitable that the solution to their problems will also be different. The growing perception that the concerns and interests of black women were not the same with those of white women has led some theorist to resist using the label 'feminism' and adopt a different name to suit their needs. The term 'womanism' is introduced to provide a contemporary alternative to 'feminism'.

Keywords: Feminism, Womanism, Womanist, Sexism, Racism, Classism, Lesbianism, Patriarchy, Womanhood, Selfhood, Marginalization, etc.

"Enough ink has been spilled", says Simone de Beauvoir, "in quarrelling over feminism, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about, however, for the voluminous nonsense uttered during the last century seems to have done little to illuminate the problem" (Beauvoir 13). This remark by one of the greatest feminist philosophers of the twentieth century hints at the rather complicated issues surrounding feminism problematizing the smooth study of the subject. It is, indeed, impossible to provide a perfect, all-inclusive and universally accepted definition of feminism.

For a number of reasons the term 'feminism' can mean different things to different people, and can have a variety of functions. However, just a few selections of definitions of feminism by feminists will throw some light on the issues surrounding feminism that make it a complicated term.

According to Theresa Billington-Greig:

> [Feminism] May be defined as a movement seeking the recognization of the world upon a basis of sex-equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (Sheila Ruth 5)

This definition incorporates the fundamental demand of equal rights for women with men and an ideology of social transformation by ending sexism in all forms. Another definition of feminism provided by Jill Johnson runs like this:

> Feminism at heart is a massive complaint. Lesbianism is the solution.... Until all women are lesbians there will be no true political revolution. No feminist per se has advanced a solution outside of accommodation to the man. (Sheila Ruth 5)

Unlike the definition given by Theresa Billington-Greig, the one provided by Jill Johnson is characterized by a radical call encouraging lesbianism as a means to freedom for women. On the other hand, Charlotte Bunch, it is:

> ... an entire world view or gestalt, nor just a laundry list of 'women's issues'. Feminist theory provide a basis for understanding every area of our lives, and a feminist perspective can affect the world politically, culturally, economically, and spiritually. (Sheila Ruth 5)

These are but a very few examples of the various definitions of feminism. In fact, one wonders at the multiplicity and variety of themes incorporating feminism if one looks up at a dictionary of feminism.

The history of feminism is the history of the women's movement. An organized women's movement can be said to have existed since the second part of the nineteenth century. Earlier, there were individual women who campaigned of the principle of the equality of the sexes. *Christine de Pisans Book* of the city of ladies written in the fourteenth century is an example of feminist tought. Olympe de Gouges' *Declaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (*Declaration of the rights of woman and of the female citizen*) published in 1791 can be cited as another example. After a year British intellectual and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) wrote her influential book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. The book was based on egalitarian principles of the French Revolution. Wollstonecraft was also the first to describe marriage as a form of legal prostitution (David Macey 123). The women's movement in Europe and America began around 1860 and started to decline in 1920. The movement of this period is usually referred to as the first wave or old wave of feminism.

The 'first wave' (1860- 1920) of modem feminism campaigned for political, social, and economic rights. After much struggle women secured the right to vote in 1918 in England; and in 1920, with the 19th Amendment to the constitution, women were enfranchised in the United States. However, the movement was pushed into the background by the two world wars, the economic crisis of 1930s, and the economic reconstruction in the 1940s and 1950s to be recognized in the 1960s and 1970s as the second wave.

In the second wave of feminism, which can be said to have started in the 1960s, the women's movement pushed beyond the early quest for political rights for greater equality and on the development of women in a male dominated society. The movement now consists of various consciousness-raising organizations that focus on the discrimination of women. The movement's fundamental beliefs can be summarized by the slogan the personal is political, claiming that personal experience is, "neither individual nor isolated, but it is social, political, and systematic" (Chris Murray 377). The major feminists of this period are Greer, Juliet Mitchell, Kate Millett and Firestone, but Beauvoir and Friedan are commonly seen as the first mothers of women's liberation. According to Fiona Tolan, Simone de Beauvoir "can be best understood perhaps as a bridge between the two waves; combining the progressive social vision of the first, and beginning to articulate some of the suspicions after femininity and gender that would concern proponents of the second" (Patrica Waugh 319). The pioneering American feminist Betty Friedan wrote her book The *Feminist Mystique* in 1963. Friedan is considered to be the first feminist who, in her book, wrote about frustration and psychological distress of 1950s housewives in America. She labelled their secret sufferings "as the problem that has no name" (Bell Hooks 19).

It is a well-known fact that the two waves of the women's movement was largely defined and led by the educated middle-class white women who directed the movement primarily around their own concerns. Women of colour started realizing that the movement has failed in addressing their own concerns. As a result an ambivalent relationship is created between the white women and women of other classes and races. Sojourner Truth (1795-1883), a slave who gained her freedom in 1827, was among the firsts who raised her voice against the exclusionary logic practiced by white feminist in the United States. Her famous "Ain't I a Woman?" speech delivered extemporaneously at a woman's rights convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851 is best remembered as a landmark speech by a black woman. Little wonder, the critic Gayatri Chakravotry Spivak has characterized the dominant feminist theory emerging in the 1970s in the West as "hegemonic feminist theory" (Reina Lewis and Sara Mills 75).

It is but clear that, quote Karen Sacks, "... the white middle-class movement did not speak for all women, they do not examine the demands, priorities, and alliances... from the viewpoint of class roots and class interest" (Sheila Ruth 511). An increasing number of black, lesbian, and working-class women were protesting at the white feminists' call for unity and solidarity as it was based on an assumption that women constituted a gender-based class or caste that was unified by common oppression. Chela Sandoval puts it this way:

> From the beginning of what has been known as the second wave of the women's movement. US Third World feminists have claimed a feminism at odds with that being developed by US white women. Already in 1970 with the publication of *Sisterhood is Powerful*, black feminist Francies Beal was naming the second wave of US feminism as a 'white women's movement' because it insisted on organizing along the binary gender division male/female alone. (Reina Lewis and Sara Mills 78)

Unlike the white women, women of colour are oppressed not just by sexism but by racism and classism as well. They have to fight against this, what has been referred to as, 'tripartite plight' themselves as, to use Barbara Smith's words, "... white women don't work on racism [and classism] to do a favour for someone else, solely to benefit Third World women" (Sheila Ruth 3).

As women's experiences are varied and different, it is but inevitable that the solution to their problems will also be different. The growing perception that the concerns and interests of black women were not the same with those of white women had led some theories to resist using the label 'feminism' and adopt a different name to suit their needs.

The African American novelist, poet, essayist, short-story write, and activities Alice Malsenior Walker has proposed that a newly defined term 'womanism' will provide a contemporary alternative to 'feminism'. According to Walker, the term womanism better addresses the needs of black women and women of colour in general. In the *New York Times Magazine* in 1984 Alice Walker has said:

> I don't choose womanism because it is 'better' than feminism... I choose it because I prefer the sound, the feel, the fit of it; because I cherish the spirit of the women (like Sojourner) the word calls to mind, and because I share the old ethnic-American habit of offering society a new word when the old word [feminism] it is using fails to describe behaviour and change that only a new [womanism] can help it more fully see. (Web)

Although referred to those who supported women's rights in the nineteenth century, the term womanism now implies to black feminism.

Sharing "the old ethnic-American habit of offering society a new word," Alice Walker coined and introduced a new term 'womanist' in her book *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, giving four level meanings of the term:

> Womanist 1. From *womanish*. (Opp. of 'girlish', i.e., frivolous, irresponsible, not serious.) A black feminist or feminist of colour. From the black folk expression of mothers to female children. "You acting womanish", i.e., like a woman. Usually referring to outrageous, audacious, courageous or wilful behaviour. Wanting to know more and in greater depth than is considered 'good' for one. Interested in grown-up doings. Acting grown up. Being grown up. Interchangeably with another black folk expression: "You trying to be grown." Responsible. In charge. Serious.
>
> 2. *Also:* A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or nonsexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counter-balance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or nonsexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally universalist, as in: "Mama, why are we brown, pink, and yellow, and our cons ins are white, beige, and black?" Ans: "Well. You know the colored race is just like a flower graden, with every colour flower represented." Traditionally capable, as in: "Mama, I'm walking to Canada and I'm taking you and a bunch of other slaves with me." Reply: "It wouldn't be the first time."
>
> 3. Loves music. Loves dance. *Loves* the moon. Loves the spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves Struggle. *Loves* the Folk. Loves herself. *Regardless.*

4. Womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender. (Alice Walker 136)

The neologism 'womanist' was coined by Alice Walker as one of the many attempts by feminists of colour to find a name which could signal their commitment to egalitarian social relations, a commitment which the name 'feminism' had seemingly betrayed.

The term 'womanist', as defined by Walker in her definition quoted above, is derived from *'womanish'* the black folk expression used by mothers to female children as in "you acting womanish"; that is, acting like a woman or acting grown up and becoming serious. A womanist is a black feminist or feminist of colour. A womanist loves other woman, sexually and/or nonsexually; appreciates and prefers woman's culture; also loves music, dance, the spirit and most importantly, 'herself'. For Walker, to be womanist is not to be a separatist but a universalist. Womenism opposes separatist ideologies and it incorporates and support black men as an integral part of black women's lives. Womanism is committed to the 'survival and wholeness' of entire people, male as well as female. Therefore, a womanist, according to Alice Walker, is to a feminist as purple is to lavender. (Alice Walker 136)

Literary 'womanism', with its impetus in 1960s Black Feminism, find its own proven idiom not only in Alice Walker, but in Toni Morrison, Poule Marshall, Gayl Jones and many of their contemporaries. However, as A. Robert Lee has pointed out:

> Womanism itself, as ideology, was and remains Alice Walker's own way of historicizing the gendered toughness and passed-down wisdom which, from slavery onwards, has underwritten the survival of African-American woman against the double odds of racism and sexism, be the latter white or black. The terms implies a womanhood at once individual yet mutual, the refusal of patriarchal exclusion first from literacy, then from literature itself... and, accompanyingly, a vast experiential savvy with its own self-vaunting sass and wit. (A. Robert Lee 1998)

It remains to say that 'womanism,' for Alice Walker, is a uniquely different kind of black feminism. It look towards freedom for black women from all kinds of oppression and cherishes the desire for selfhood. Womanism positively sees the supportive bonding of black women as an essential requirement to give meaning to their struggle for social change and freedom. "While both [feminism and womanism] modes of thought originate from the same wellspring of resistance to patriarchal domination, womanism intensifies the struggle by fighting from several fronts because it believes that patriarchy, like the Gorgon, is many-headed" (Tuzyline Jita Allan 136).

Alice Walker's 'womanism', however, is not without its own limits. It has also generated debates and controversies in the African world. The First African Womanist Workshop was held at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The workshop began on 23rd January, 1998 in which women and scholars from African and African decent from different parts of the world gathered "to give meaning and contribute to the expanding understanding of womanism, especially from an African context" (Chichi Aniagolu 96). A scholar of Vista University, Sisi Maqagi, attacked Chikwenyu Okonjo Ogunyemi, a leading exponent of womanism in Africa, in her paper presented in the workshop. Maqagi felt that, like feminism, womanism is also guilty of generalizations. She also pointed out that, "while womanism can be a useful theoretical construct throught which insight can be gained into black women's writing, it is also afroth with contradictions that need to be address" (Chichi Aniagolu 98). Another scholar Nokuzola Mdende challenged the very premise of womanist organization and went on to say that, "womanism was a utopia, exclusionary and unrepresentative of 'real' African women" (Chichi Aniagolu 99). According to these scholars, womanism as an ideology has failed to successfully take into account the heterogeneity of women of Africa and African descent with different histories and realities.

Clenora Hudson-Weems has been credited of coining a new terminology, "Africana Womanism." Which, according to her, "...places Africa at the centre...as it relates to African women" (Chichi Aniagolu 99). For Hudson-Weems, 'Africana Womanism' is different both from feminism as well as womanism of Alice Walker. Africana Womanism, as a philosophy, gives emphasis on the female experience and their role and presence in the history of African and her descendents.

The 'feminism' is a complex term is a truism. Fiona Tolan has opined that it, "should be understood as a discourse: a discussion of multiple related ideas" (Patrica Waugh 319). Recognizing the multiplicity of ideas related with the term, Fiona Tolan, in writing a chapter on 'feminism', his wisely preferred using 'Feminisms' with a extra 'x' as its title. However, whatever we talk of what feminism is, it sure is a philosophy, a way of thinking. It is based, primarily on the thinking that there always is a gender inequality between the sexes: that women traditionally has been regarded as inferior to man physically and intellectually, and that both law and theology and ordered their subjection; that women has been marginalized in every sphere of life; that everything that gives priority to the assumption of male-supremacy is based on a cultural construct and its very foundation must be put into serious question.

It is true the nothing can please all and please forever. Perhaps, it is this that has generated the possibility of creating changes in human

thinking and endeavour all through the ages in human history. Modern (literary) theories, which has come up in great numbers with the so-called 'theory revolution' of the 1960s, are but emerging intellectual ideas from the human mind. The more accurate and acceptable theorization will stay, though in changing forms, while others die out in oblivion and disuse. Feminism, as a theory or an ideology, is divided into various forms. Womanism, as a variant of feminism, cherishes the spirit of women, especially black women and women of colour. Though the term 'womanism' has itself generated a number of debates and controversies, it nevertheless, has helped in the expansion of feminist horizons in theory and practice. What unites 'feminism' and 'womanism' is that both speak for women's rights in general.

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The Marginalized Characters in *Untouchable* and *Scavenger's Son*—A Comparitive Study

Prof. N.C. Veerendra Kumar

An attempt is being made to comparatively study the marginalized characters in *Untouchable* and *Scavenger's Son* by Mulk Raj Anand and Thakazhi Shiva Shankar Pillai respectively.

The Indian Society, since the Vedic period and before, was based on the caste system or Varna system. The occupations were hereditary and none could change their hereditary jobs. The Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Veyshyas, were considered superior and highly-placed in the caste-hierarchy. The Shudras comprised peasants, labourers, weavers, cobblers and others. The scavengers who did the work of cleaning latrines were called untouchables. They were placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Th untouchables were marginalized economically, politically and socially. Moreover, the marginalized untouchables of scavengers were exploited by the high castes economically, politically, socially and sexually too. Education and teaching were in the hands of the upper castes. Even the public places like temples, hotels and theatres were not kept open for the marginalized untouchables or scavengers. This kind of situation existed in India before the advent of British.

After the arrival of British, the scene of the Indian society began to change gradually. They brought with them their own systems of education and government.

The British introduced many laws for the betterment of the society. The modern enlightened education system brought about awakening among the masses. Influenced by the Western education many Indian social reformers tried to eradicate social evils like 'Sati'; 'Child marriage'

and practice of untouchability. These changes posed a threat to the caste fabric of the Indian society, which swept away caste inequalities. Till the advent of nineteenth century, no writer, not even a novelist except Anand and Thakazhi wrote about marginalized, downtrodden and exploited section of the society. Most of the writers concentrated their focus either on upperclass or rarely on the middle class society. The writers like Anand and Thakazhi, took a bold step of writing about the marginalized masses of the society. Then onwards, started the 'Era of the literature of the masses.'

Part-A: *Untouchable*

Most of the writers and the reading public during the publication of *Untouchable* believed that a novel should be written as per conventional norms of novel writing. It was believed that a novel should not deal with dirt or dung. It was considered filthy. No writer, before Anand, had taken a bold step of writing about human excreta.

Indian civilization and traditional orthodox outlook were partly responsible for the inheritance of such ideas. But the recent writers like Anand tried to overcome such wrong notions. Most of the writers and the reading public, since their childhood, believed that thinking of excreta was shameful. Under this kind of situation the task of removing and carrying excreta had been done by the lowest section of the society. Untouchables or outcastes lived in the outskirts of the town or village. As these people did the filthy job, they were considered unclean and dirty. A sweeper was not treated as a human being. He was treated by the caste-Hindus worse than a lower animal. Thus the sweepers suffered from pollution complex. They were the object of disgust and ridicule. Even among the sweepers, we may find the sensitive looking characters like Bakha and Chudala in *Untouchable* and *Scavenger's Son*—respectively.

Regarding the theme of the novel, the action takes place on one day in a small area. Anand's *Untouchable* cannot be accepted as a novel from the conventional standards of a novel. The novel has no story, which can sustain the reader's interest. The events that take place in the life of a young sweeper constitute the action of the novel. These events are organized into a pattern. Anand has selected for his theme modern Indian society especially crushed humanity. Untouchability is the theme of the novel. Anand, in this novel, exposes the stigma of untouchabilility and casteism, which are a shame of humanity.

Bakha is an untouchable whose heart is indeed more civilized and virtuous than those of most caste-Hindus and yet he is the target of their cruelty. He tries to keep his identity and be happy. Instead he is constantly hated abused and insulted. Bakha is not only an individual, but also a type; the experience of Bakha with different characters in a single day is

dramatized in the novel. He listens Gandhi telling his 'concept of casteless society'. The Salvationist—Hutchinson offers Christianity and the poet Iqbal suggests the flush, as the possible remedy for the malady of untouchability. But Anand feels that none of the reforms can erase the stigma of untouchability. The only solution for radical cure is selfless love for the fellow beings, Buddhist compassion and Christian charity.

In this connection Prof. C.D. Narasimhaiah comments on *Untouchable* thus:

> "In *Untouchable* Anand creates a character who is seeking identity for himself in a world which has for ages suppressed his kind, a degrading social ill against which philosophers, poets and reformers have fought for the a thousand years. While Bakha occupies the centre of the stage throughout the novel there is not any attempt to idealize him. He is a type and an individual...." (1996 1011)

Among the prominent characters Lakha is presented as a traditional scavenger and zamadar of the scavengers of the Bulandshahar town. He is old and cannot do his job. He has Bakha and Rakha as sons and Sohini as his daughter. Lakha stands for servitude and submission. He cannot think of revolting against the tyranny of the caste Hindus. He is presented as dirty and unclean. He exercises his authority over his children. He used to scold his children all the time. It does not mean that he has no love for his children. He believes that the caste Hindus illtreat them because religion prescribes the practice of untouchability. Bakha is the hero of the novel. He is the representative of the 'Modern India'. He is known for hardwork and discipline. He wants to establish his identity. Despite his duty consciousness, he is always scolded by his father. He imitates the life of the Tommies, because they treat him kindly. He tries to be clean, although his job is a dirty one. He is fond of reading and writing although he cannot go to school. He has high respect towards his father. He is fond of wearing the dress, shoes and caps to look like a sahib. Thus Bakha craves for recognition, which is denied to him in a caste-based society. He is equally fond of games like playing cricket. Bakha is a bit superior to other sweepers. The character of Rakha is the symbol of dirt and uncleanness. He is not hardworking like his brother Bakha. Rakha belongs to the category of the traditional sweepers. He is a contrast to his brother Bakha. Further, Rakha is presented as a typically marginalized who is always dirty, lazy and disease- ridden.

Anand presents the character of the temple priest Pandit Kalinath as a representative of the caste Hindus. Anand has contempt towards the Pandit. He tries to molest Sohini, when she comes to clean the temple yard. He cries of pollution when she protests against his desire. He is a symbol of evil, ugliness and hypocrisy.

Gandhi, in the novel, appears as a social reformer. In fact Bakha is thrilled to list the speech of Gandhi. He calls the untouchables as the sons of God. He regards untouchability as a blot on Hinduism. Gandhi wishes to be reborn as an untouchable. Regarding the eradication of untouchability Gandhi speaks thus:

> "They are sunk in ignorance. All public wells, temples roads, schools, and sanatoriums must be declared open to the untouchables...." (*Ibid.*: 137)

Anand has been successful in portraying the minor characters like Havaldar Charat Singh, Colonel Hutchinson, the missionary, Iqbal, the poet, etc.

Sohini is the prominent woman character in the novel. She is presented as the daughter of Lakha and the sister of Bakha. She is the target of kindness and sympathy. Through the character of Sohini, Anand tells how miserable the life of an untouchables woman is. She is presented as obedient, submissive girl of an outcaste family. But she proves a virtous woman when she does not yield to the desires of the priest. She commands sympathy of the readers. Anand has successfully portrayed the other minor female characters like Gulabo, a washerwoman; the caste Hindu woman in the line; Colonel's wife and others.

It is relevant to analyze some of the incidents in the novel.

In the incident at the well, Sohini goes to well to fetch water. The untouchables could not go near the well. Some passers by belonging to caste Hindus should come and offer them water. Unfortunately there was a long line of women standing to get a pitcher of water. After waiting for long, she got water, when the priest comes and offers her water with the intention of seducing her later. Similar incident takes place at the courtyard. Sohini comes to clean the yard as ordered by the priest. The priest tries to molest her, when the occasion comes. But Sohini does not yield to his desire. Then the priest cries of pollution. This incident shows how a hypocrite the priest is.

The incident at the merchant's shop in the bazaar shows how unfortunate the untouchables were. When he goes to the shop, he gives coin to buy a cigarette. The merchant sprinkles water on it before he takes. He throws cigarette at his face as if he were a god. This incident highlights how orthodox and contemptuous the caste Hindus were towards the sweepers.

The incident at the house of a caste Hindu woman shows how sweepers were put to series of humiliations in their routine life. When Bakha comes to ask for food, she readily gives alms to a saint, when Bakha demands the same she scolds him with contempt.

The following words indicate as to how Bakha is humiliated by an upper-caste woman for defiling her:

> "But eater of your master! why did you sit down on my doorstep, if you had to sit down at all? You have defiled my house! you should have sit there in the gully. Now I will have to sprinkle holy water all over". (*Ibid.*: 68)

In order to get food the marginalized untouchables had to go and beg from the caste Hindus. They were always at the mercy of the upper castes. Hence they were always abused, humiliated and ill treated by the upper castes. The untouchables who were marginalized could never think of buying new clothes to be worn in daily life. As they were poor they could not afford to do so. As a gesture of generosity, upper caste men gave their clothes to them. Being uneducated, the marginalized untouchables could never demand social equality and justice which were denied to them for many years. The concluding part of the novel proves that a man like Bakha hopes to live in future with self respect and will be free from the stigma of pollution.

Part-B: *Scavenger's Son*

Thakazhi became very popular throughout India for his descriptions of 'the little people' common man. He is always drawn towards the marginalized, down trodden, the lowest section of the society. In all the works, Thakazhi deals with the social problems with reference to Keralite society. He has proved that even a scavenger may also be an instrument in social revolution; social change. The important characters in the novel are—untouchables or outcastes. The story reveals the fact that anyone who is an out caste or an untouchable by birth, cannot change his occupation even if the were humble to do so. The number of incidents in the novel prove that a member of this class, even if he were clean, remains 'unclean'. The novel which is a new departure, presents the marginalized lowest section of the society and their human feelings in the rigid caste Hindu society.

Thakazhi, in this novel, depicts the life of a scavenger, Chudalamuttu. Ishukkumuttu, Chudalamuttu's father is a scavenger and cleaning the latrines is his job. After Ishukkumuttu's death Chudalamuttu continues his hereditary job. He has seen as to how his father is abused, insulted by his superiors. Then onwards Chudala comes to the conclusion that his son should never become a scavenger. He wants to make his son into a man of something by providing him good education. Chudala's greatest ambition in his life is to own a plot and a house of his own. Chudala launches a union of scavengers to safeguard their interests. After sometime, he begins to misuse the union for his personal gains. He earns money by

cheating the workers. All his earnings and savings he gives into the hands of the municipal president.

Pichandi, another scavenger starts the union for the second time. Chudala spreads the rumour that Pichandi is involved in a theft case. His wife and children become destitute.

Valli, Chudala's wife gets a son who is named 'Mohanan'. At school he is put to all types of humiliation as he is a scavenger's son. Chudala decided to change his job to get rid of this torture. The Municipal president cheats Chudala by not returning his money. At last Chudala is given a job of a guard to look after the graveyard. Cholera breaks out, Chudala and Valli become the victims of the disease that made Mohana orphan. He helplessly becomes a scavenger. But he craves for revenge against injustice suffered by his parents. At the end the president's house is set on fire.

Thus Thakazhi presents three generations of a scavenger's family. Ishukkumuttu belonging to first generation is an orthodox traditional scavenger who accepts his fate without protest; the second generation although fights against the system fails in its efforts; the third generation is becoming politically aware of rights; has good leadership and self-confidence. Thus Thakazhi has proved that even a scavenger may also be a protagonist of a novel. He too may become an instrument in social revolution, a social change. Among the male characters of the novel is Ishkkumuttu, a traditional scavenger who has been serving in the Alleppy town municipality since thirty years. His son is Chudalamuttu. When the novel begins he has been suffering from sickness. Being traditional and submissive, Ishukkumuttu cannot revolt against the unjust municipal officials. A part of his wage is taken by the overseer, Kesava Pillai. This is the fate of not only Ishukkmuttu but of all the scavengers. He is uneducated and ignorant. Despite his sickness, he cannot claim leave for his sickness, cannot claim leave for his work. His ambition in life is to make his son a successor to himself. At last he died with hunger and thirst.

The prominent male character of the novel is Chudalamuttu. Unlike his father, he is not submissive and is aware of his wage-cut. He wants to something to get rid this. Inevitably he against his will, becomes a scavenger after his father's death. Unlike other scavengers, he does not drink toddy. In fact, he can save money out of his income. He never likes his future generation to be scavengers. After his marriage he becomes father to Mohanan. In order to make his son into something, he offers his son good education. He does not even like to touch or kiss his son. He starts a union but never joins. He joins hands with municipal officials for

his personal benefit. His unrealistic dreams cannot be fulfilled even at the end of his life.

Mohanan is the son of Chudalamuttu, the protagonist of the novel. He belongs to the third generation in Ishukkumuttu's family. He, being a scavenger, is mocked at by the upper castes for being named after Mohanan. Despite the efforts of his father to make him something, despite good education, Mohanan at last becomes a scavenger like his father. But Mohanan has an attitude of revenge against the municipal president who has cheated his father's money. He feels satisfied when the president's house is set on fire.

We can also find minor characters like Pichandi, a friend of Chudalamuttu; Kesava Pillai, the overseer; the municipal president; hotel worker; Palani; Vadivelu; Shuppu; Sudiran; lawyer Kurup; Mummu the tea-stall owner—who have been portrayed by the novelist with equal importance and are convincing.

Among the women characters Valli is the prominent one. She is the wife of the protagonist-Chudalamuttu. She did not have father and mother. She loves Chudala and marries him. She does not believe in her husband's unrealistic dreams. But she can do nothing. In this connection the following words of the narrator show her opinion about her husband's desires.

"When the excitement of her new life had worn off and she found herself idle with nothing to do and no one to talk to Valli constantly thought about her husband's plans. Could all these things be achieved? To her it all seemed unreal. These were impossible dreams" (*Scavengers son*: 1993, 37). Valli supports her husband to achieve his goal. She is always scolded by her husband for one reason or the other. She sacrifices her whole life for the future of her son, Mohanan. She is practical when compared with her husband. Thakazhi has effectively portrayed the minor female characters like Pichandi's wife; Lawyer Kurup's wife and the neighbours of Valli.

It is relevant to study the significant episodes of the novel. At the opening of the novel, Ishukkumuttu's death takes place. He has been a traditional scavenger in Alleppy town since thirty years. He is suffering from a disease. He wants his son also be a scavenger like him. He needs leave for work, but the same is denied by the authorities. He has not been paid due wage. Although he is suffering of sickness, he cannot even get food and water. After his death, his body was buried under a tree because his son cannot pay for the graveyard. Thus Ishukkumuttu died miserably.

The episode of the formation of the scavenger's union has been portrayed by Thakazhi is convincing. Chudala takes the leadership of the

union. In order to safeguard their interests, all the scavengers of the town unite together. But Chudala is in a dilemma whether to join the union or not. If he does so, he will have to face the consequence from the municipal authorities. Except Chudala, all the other workers join the union. In order to fulfil his personal benefits, he cannot go against the overseer and the president. The president is angry with Chudala. The president and Kesava Pillai know that they cannot cheat the workers if they form their union. Hence, with the help of Chudala they try to break the union. They are in fact successful in their effort.

The marriage episode of Chudala is no less important in the novel. They get married to fulfil their life's goal. Chudala wants to earn move money so that he can be strong among the scavengers community. He never likes his future generation to be scavengers like him. He cherishes unrealistic desires about his future generation's life. The birth of Mohanan is very significant for Valli and Chudala. A scavenger's son with the name of Mohanan looks ridiculous for the caste-Hindus. Chudala never likes his son to become a scavenger. Hence he provides him good education. He does not even like to touch or kiss his son, because being a scavenger, he is unclean. At school Mohanan suffers a lot because he is a scavenger's son. He grows up without knowing what his father is. All the efforts of Chudala prove meaningless and futile. Mohanan, with the help of his friend, realizes that his father is a scavenger. This is a shock to Chudala. Mohanan is often insulted by his friends of being unclean and stinking. At last Chudala gets an opportunity of becoming a watchman of the graveyard. So that, he can overcome his sorrow and suffering.

The irlcident of the death of Chudala and Valli takes place at the end of the novel. Mohanan wants to have revenge against the municipal president. Cholera breaks out in the town. Many scavengers fall victims to cholera. They cannot get any treatment. At last both Chudala and Valli become victims of cholera. Mohanan becomes an ophan and works as scavenger. His father's dream remains unfulfilled. The president never returns Chudala's money. Mohanan remains bachelor. He does not want to marry because if he does so the future generation will become scavengers. He craves for revenge against the president. He brings together all the workers to fight against injustice. At last the president's house is set on fire.

By studying Anand's *Untouchable* and Thakazhi's *Scavenger's Son* comparatively, one can notice many features of comparison. They are:

Both Anand and Thakszhi are the great humanists of the twentieth century. Both advocate kindness, sympathy and human compassion for the poor downtrodden masses. In both the novels, the aim of both is to

put an end to age-old harassment, humiliation and exploitation of the marginalized by the upper-castes. Both have upheld the universal brotherhood and casteless society. In both the novels, the protagonists are from the lowest stratum of the society. In both the novels one can find the two types of characters. They are the older generation with traditional outlook and the younger generation with modern outlook and are exceptionally clean.

Similarly one can notice a few contrasting features. They are:

While Anand is placed in 1930s Thakazhi is placed much earlier in 1880s. Anand's *Untouchable* was written during thirties whereas Thakazhi's *Scavenger's Son* was written during fifties. In *Untouchable* Anand covers two generations of Lakha and Bakha whereas in *Scavenger's Son* Thakazhi presents three generations of Ishukkumuttu, Chudalamuttu and Mohanan.

In *Untouchable* Bakha cannot come out of the stigma of untouchability by changing his job...he was a weak sufferer although a modern youth. Whereas Chudala in *Scavenger's Son* tries to revolt against the system and in fact changes his job and becomes a watchman in the graveyard.

The influence of Gandhi is rather great on Anand as the novel was written during pre-independence period, Thakazhi was also influenced by Gandhi and his novel was written before independence. Lastly, Anand hints at the gradual and smooth transformation of society towards casteless and classless society, whereas Thakazhi hints at the transformation of the society by mass revolution.

Conclusion

When we study the two novels of Anand and Thakazhi, Anand's *Untouchable* is more convincing than Thakazhi's *Scavengers's Son*. The reason is obvious that in *Untouchable* the picture of Bulandshahar town is depicted. The society we find in *Untouchable* is similar to the Indian society in general. We find Brahmins, the merchant class, Christians, Sikhs, and lastly, untouchables or scavengers. But in *Scavenger's Son* we find only middle class and lower class. He has portrayed the Keralite society. Hence Frame and Canvas of *Untouchable* is border than that of *Scavenger's Son*. Hence it appeals to us most. However, Thakazhi followed Anand while choosing characters, the theme, etc., yet, Thakazhi's characters are not submissive like Anand's.

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27

Women as Subaltern in Patriarchal Construct: Bapsi Sidhwa's *Water* and Tehmina Durrani's *Blasphemy*

Dr. Shamenaz Bano

Women have always been considered as subaltern in the patriarchal society be it India, or any other country. In the ancient times, there were many rigid customs and traditions imposed on them in the name of religion, making their lives miserable. There were child-marriages common both in Hindus and Muslim societies. While Muslims had the 'purdah' system for women, Hindus had the customs of Sati. Now, because of the efforts led by many social reformers and the influence of Western education, tremendous changes have encountered in our society making it liberal day-by-day but still women have long way to go in achieving real emancipation.

Earlier in the Indian sub-continent, writing was male's monopoly but in the recent years many writers have emerged on the Literacy scene enriching. These writers are not only gaining recognition in their countries but are globally read. The most important aspects of their writing, is that they are trying to share not only their experiences but also the experiences of other women in their works making it emotionally very rich. Bapsi Sidhwa and Tehmina Durrani are two such writers who have tried to highlight various problems relating with the existence of women in a society which is bound by age-old norms and customs hindering the progress of women.

Bapsi Sidhwa in *Water* has thrown light on the plight of widows in Hindu society in 1930s when they had to follow many rigid rules and regulations. While Tehmina Durrani in her novel, *Blasphemy* has highlighted the mis-interpretation of religion by some clergy men for their

own benefit making the lives of women miserable. In my paper, I am trying to highlight the efforts made by these two great writers of the sub-continent in highlighting the problems of women in patriarchal society.

Water is the fifth novel of Bapsi Sidhwa which is based on the ill-treatment meted to women in pre-partitioned India when their lives were very miserable. Sidhwa who was born in undivided India in 1938 in Karachi and brought up by her parents in Lahore, now lives in Houston, Texas, USA. Though author of four popular novels, she is best known for her collaborative work with Canadian India filmmaker Deepa Mehta.

Deepa Mehta adapted her novel, *Ice Candy Man* (1991) into a critically acclaimed Bollywood movie in 1998 naming it *Earth* and with this their collaboration started. Later Sidhwa wrote a novel, *Water* based on Deepa Mehta's movie of the same name released in 2005. It was a wish by the producer herself for Bapsi Sidhwa. And credit goes to her commendable writing style which took story to a different level by adding more background to some characters including child widow giving a more interesting touch. For writing this novel she has read extensively about the customs and traditions of India focusing more on widow system. By doing so, she was able to justiry the background of each customs and traditions portrayed in the film and novel.

The story of *Water* is set in pre-partitioned India in 1938 when the customs related with widows were very rigid. The protagonist of the novel is a little girl named Chuiya (mouse in Hindi) who was betrothed at an early age of 6 and became widow at a tender age of 8. In olden days, Hindu religion followed strict rules and regulations regarding widow, they were discarded from the house to the widow ashram or if they lived in their own house they were discarded from the family to live a secluded life. With their head shaven, only allowed to wear white cotton sari without blouse with any jewellery to wear or cosmetics to use. Means they had to give up all their material possessions. With no proper food to eat and just one meal a day for them and were only allowed to sleep on the ground. They were not allowed to take part in any festivities and were barred from all types of gatherings. On festival days, they were paltry alms by temple-goers where they had to wait like beggars and on regular days were given a cup of rice and a fistful of lentils for every 8-hour of singing and dancing in temple. So this was sustenance for almost all widows if not for some. If on any occasion, she was too sick to perform then she had to starve as she was not offered food to eat. There were many other harsh rules imposed on them in the name of religion. In this way their lives were given over to penitence. Although, all these rules and regulations does not exist in today's scenario, but the story of the novel is of olden days when such customs were prevalent in the Hindu society

with the backdrop of Indian freedom struggle at its height. The story revolves around Chuiya, the young widow dealing with these harsh rules and regulations of widowhood.

After attaining widowhood, Chuiya was send to the widow ashram in Varanasi where she was supposed to live her entire life serving the ashram and following the tradition as imposed on her by the society. There were many widows in the ashram of different age groups from across the country. Kalyani, one of the widows living in the ashram is a beautiful lady with long hair, who has a secret admirer, Narayan, a young and charming upper-class revolutionary and a ardent follower of Gandhism. Kalyani is forced into prostitution by the head of the ashram to support it. Shakuntala is one of the widows of the ashram who look after various activities involved in the ashram.

The novel, *Water* is an account of struggle of widows in the ashram and society at the time of pre-partitioned India. Various strict rules and problems which they had to face in every spheres of life without any complain. Reflecting the society of 1938, a period of British colonial power when, it was a time when in the Hindu society, the marriage of young girls to olden men was commonplace in certain parts of India. And if the husband dies, especially in the Brahmin family his young widow was asked or forced to spend rest of her life in a widow's ashram; this was a type of punishment given to her because she was held responsible for her husband's death. In this way it was to make amends for the sins from her previous life which supposedly caused her husband's death.

Chuiya is one such victims of this ideology leading a miserable life at such an age when she is supposed to play with toys. Because of her husband's death, she is considered as a bad omen by her family and society. She never met her husband but is guilty of his death and is forced to self-renunciation. This ill-practice was prevalent in pre-partitioned India but with the rise of many social reformers including Gandhiji, a new ray of hope enlightened for them. This was also a time when Gandhi was at the peak of freedom and nationalist movements, he was also advocator of social movement in India including the change in ideology regarding widows.

Chuiya being a widow was not allowed to touch non-widows, even she was not allowed to cast her shadow on them. It is so because she was considered as bad omen or polluted one. She is mostly confined to live in the four walls of ashram engaging her in praying or fasting in atonement for the sin which she has not committed. As according to the Hindu belief; widowhood was the direct consequences of the sin committed in the past life as they believe in reincarnation. Women are much freer now as in the olden days they were not allowed to remarry. Question

arises as to why widows were treated in this way in India before independence? Answer goes deep rooted in the religion, in Brahmanical tradition, a woman is recognized as a person only when she is with her husband. She has no identity, no existence outside her marriage. Hence it was necessary that if her husband dies, she should leave everything and cease to exist. This ideology was also responsible for the barbaric act of Sati; the burning of the wife with the funeral pyre of her husband. Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought for the abolition of Sati. Credit also goes to the British Laws who also outlawed it. But things were favourable for the men in the society as they were allowed to remarry, keep as many mistresses as they wish or visit prostitutes. And for all these they always took the refuge in religion.

We see examples in the novel when one Brahmin claims that it is their holy texts which allow Brahmins to sleep with any women of his choice, and the women they sleep are the blessed one according to religion. This is the hypocrisy and double standard of the male-dominated society concerning women and particularly widowed women which the novel exposes. The novelist throws lights on the pains and sufferings of the widows and completely sympathizes with them. Sidhwa herself is related with many humanitarian issues relating women ever since her very young age. In an interview given to the TV channel, she accounts the post partition days, when she helped refugees out of her wits and even against her religion. This maybe one of the reasons that she is able to do justice with the character and even relate herself with the woman who rescued Chuiya and Shakuntala from their miseries.

Water, a heart-touching story leaves reader spellbound with real and sensitive characters leaving a mark whoever reads it. These real istic characters reflects the spirit of the age when society was very different than today's. Though the story of the novel revolves around the protagonist, Chuiya but antagonist Madhumati is of vital importance.

The novel opens with the depiction of childhood scene, when Chuiya was at her parent's home. She was a small kid, playing with dolls and games with her brothers. She was inquisitive child with fascination for everything she sees and hears, wandering like a bird in the forests for fruits. She was very soft at heart as we can see her rescuing a pup stuck in a ditch. In such an age she was married when she didn't know the meaning of marriage. For her it was merriment with good food to eat during the wedding rituals with beautiful dress and jewelleries to wear. She was living in imagination unaware of her surroundings and the impact of marriage on her life. She is very unfortunate that at this tender age her husband dies and she was abandoned by her family and in-laws and was left in an ashram for renunciation.

The life in ashram is very hard for her as she never feels at home there and wants to leave it. She wishes to go back to her home but is not allowed, even her family not willing to take her back. She longs to be rescued by her mother as any other kid of her age. But this can't be happen because of the rigid customs and traditions followed in those times. So she had to stay in ashram and follow those rules and regulations which are very harsh for them. There are lots of happenings going on in the ashram but being a child she is unaware of all this.

She wants to change the hard rituals which she finds difficult to follow like fasting and praying all times and also some other self-degrading things like begging. Having an inquisitive nature, she asks questions with elders all the times. Sidhwa has done justice with the character of Chuiya by making it so innocent that readers have full sympathy with her throughout the novel.

Madhumati, the eldest widow and the decision-maker in the ashram is a shrewd lady. A person who is hated as well as flattered because of the power she possess, her friend Gulabi an eunuch who is the pimp of the ashram. Is it they who have forced Kalyani into prostitution. Here the hypocrisy is visible as they follow customs and traditions strictly but are involved in such evil act. But Madhumati believes that God will not question her because she is doing all this for the survival. She is an ironical character as though forcing Kalyani into prostitution she instructs other saying, "We must live in purity to die in purity". The other widows did not like her but they fear to question her. Only Shakuntala, a middle aged and enigmatic woman dares to challenge her. A devout Hindu, she is also able to read and write and seeks the counsel of a senior priest, Sadananda. He guides Shakuntala making her aware of her circumstances which has made her and the lives of other widows miserable. He wants her to differentiate between true faith and hypocrisy.

Kalyani, the young and beautiful widow being forced into prostitution for the sake of existence of other widows is being disrespected by them. He has a special status and is not bound to follows strict customs like other widows. She fell in love with Narayan, a young man who is ardent follower of Gandhiji. He is a man of progressive ideas who want to marry Kalyani and she being in his spell breaks rigid rules and also Madhumati's instructions. She further refuses to entertain any clients. She is both innocent and mature but is caught in the whirlpool of her own wish and society. Being attracted towards Chuiya's innocence she makes her friend.

Narayan, an ideal man represents the new India who is modern, liberal and does not believe in any kind of orthodoxy. Upholding independent outlook, he is firm in decision to marry Kalyani and is ready to fight against the society, even his family for her. He has a noble thought

to adopt Chuiya and make her life better. Sidhwa has portrayed his character as a representative of new India who keeps a balance between politics and literature; he is against British but want to recite Keats poetry in independent India. Being a rationalist, he questions archaic laws laid down in *Manusmriti* and later Vriddha Hirata. He exposes Kalyani to modern thoughts of the 20th century like widow-remarriage who inspired by him influences Shakuntala and Chuiya. He is responsible for changing the fate of Chuiya.

Sidhwa is master in the art of story-telling and defining her characters perfectly. It is her characters in the novel which holds you to the text than the story. Reading *Water*, one feels sympathetic with plight of widows especially Chuiya. It is her craftmanship that one visualizes the situation while reading her novels whether it is *Ice Candy Man*, *Pakistani Bride*, *Crow Eaters* or *An American Brat*. She is excellent in portraying her characters with realistic feelings, thoughts and actions. Because of her eloquent manner of writing, one feels connected with the characters in their happiness and sorrows. She has presented negative stories in positive manner; although there are gray characters but not black in her stories. As these characters also exhibit some positivity in some way or other like Madhumati sympathizes seeing the plight of Chuiya. What she did was wrong but she thinks she did this for the existence of widows.

In the novel, Sidhwa has highlighted an issue which is of no relevance now as society in the present scenario has completely transformed in terms of rights of widows but it was a time when such things were happenings in our society. Women in those days have suffered a lot due to rigid customs and traditions imposed on them by the society. Their strength to bear all these is beyond imagination and very difficult to imagine in present scenario. In the olden days, the survival of widows in the society was very hard. They were held responsible for the death of their husbands due to the bad deeds of previous birth. It was a curse bestowed on them due to the sin committed in their previous birth hence they have to redeem themselves from their guilt in this birth leading to a life of hardship following the strict rules decided by the society for them. Their sufferings, pains and agonies are very difficult to experience. Being deprived from the society they had often questioned God and Holy Books but their questions remained unanswered. Sidhwa, a prolific writer of the sub-continent has painted their sufferings with all her passion giving details of all shades and sides of their situations and lives. This shows her genius and versatility. Her strength lies in the ability to make a point without underlining it.

An emotional and touching story, *Water* draws our attention towards an era when the widows had to live in great hardship. Their plight can

be summed up in the sense that they were held responsible for the deaths of their husbands. It was a sin for them from which they had to go through the process of salvation throughout their lives following those strict customs and traditions which are difficult to examine in the 21st century. Like in *Ice- Candy Man*, Sidhwa has tried to depict the tragedy through the eye of a child. It is really commendable that Indian society after independence come out from the shackles of such of such orthodoxy and superstitions. We have marched much ahead and now a widow can enjoy all kinds of liberties like other women.

Tehmina Durrani, the famous writer from Pakistan is an illustrious controversial writer catapulted to fame with the publication of her autobiography, *My Feudal Lord* (1991). It won Italy's prestigious Marissa Bellasario Prize and has been translated into twenty two languages. In this book, she has written about her trauma and torture during her life with her husband, Gulam Mustafa Khar. She has also written Abdul Sattar Edhi's biography, *A Mirror to the Blind*.

Blasphemy is an enticing maiden novel by Tehmina Durrani. Angry and courageous in outlook, the novel places Durrani among the foremost writers of the Indian sub-continent. This novel has been lauded throughout the world for her courage. Durrani is the first woman in the Islamic World who has openly shown the misuse of religion by some Muslim clergy. She has shown that how people twist religious sayings for their benefit. Hence she fears threatened from Muslim fundamentalist on this. The novel has been lauded because it takes a lot of courage to deconstruct and expose the myths that fetter women in suffocating life. An extract from the book reveals the whole story:

> To me, my husband was my son's murderer. He was also my daughter's molester. A parasite nibbling on the Holy Book, he was Lucifer, holding me by the throat and driving me to sin every night. He was Bhai's destroyer, Amma Sain's tormentor. He had humbled Ma, exploited the people. He was the rapist of orphans and the fiend that fed on the weak. But over and above all this, a man closest to Allah, the one who could reach Him and save us. (143)

These are the words of the protagonist Heer, for her husband Pir Sain, who is brutal and corrupt but considered as the man of God. The novel, *Blasphemy*, is a tragic story of the beautiful Heer, who was married to Pir Sain at the age of fifteen. Pir Sain was dazzled by her beauty when he saw her with her mother, who came as a victim of circumstances to seek his blessings. Although being much older than her, he married Heer and made her second wife. People have different notions regarding, polygamy in Islam which Holy Quran endorses up to the limit of four wives per man. The Prophet, of course, lived at a time when continual warfare

produced large numbers of widows, who were left with little or no provision for themselves and their children. In these circumstances, polygamy was encouraged as an act of charity. Needless to say, the widows are not necessarily young women, but usually mothers of many children, who came as part of the deal. Polygamy is no longer common, for various good reasons.

Pir married her because he was fascinated by her beauty but never loved her. He made her his slave and forced her do those deeds which she never dreamt of. She followed her like a mute spectator but he never respected her individuality and never loved her. Throughout her life she has been humiliated, rejected by her husband. He forced her to be involved in many of misdeeds including the rapes of orphans. Heer's agony can be summed up in the following lines:

> Love's absence ailed me. I could not imagine loving my husband. He was a superior and I did not know how to love and be subservient together. Nor had he ever thought of me as a human being, let alone a woman. For no reason had he ever softened towards me, I had stirred him that little. (149)

Heer's husband was a sexual lecher and was not satisfied with one woman but still he was Pir in the eyes of people and was worshipped by them because they were ignorant about his evil nature. He enjoyed a high status in the society being the centre of respect and attention and never suffered on any ground. As Heer comments:

> As Yazid, the tyrant of Karbala, never suffered even from a headache, people believed that he was blessed by Allah. But that was a misinterpretation. In reality, Allah had abandoned him completely. He wanted nothing to do with him. (162)

Pir treated Heer very badly and throughout her life she had to bear his atrocities to such an extent that she herself became a dead soul. The Holy Quran states that:

> Wives need to be treated fairly and equally—a difficult requirement even for a rich man. Moreover, if a husband wishes to take a second wife, he should not do so if the marriage will be to the detriment of the first.

The novel depicts Heer's struggle, whose life is like a nightmare, unbearable for any human being. Living with Peer, she loses her dignity, her freedom, even her humanity till she comes to a resolution to expose the evil-man to the world. And she does this though she herself is ruined in this process. She being a weak, fragile woman challenges the supremacy of Pir. As the lines from the novel indicates:

Pir Sain was a symbol of munafiqat.

I was a soldier.

This was a jehad. (181)

This is indeed a very difficult for a woman who is compelled to live a life of seclusion from the outer world to raise her voice against the misinterpretation of religion by her own husband. Living in purdah she made up her mind to fight against the age-old conventions and norms prevalent in the society in the name of religion. As she herself says:

> ...my mind was consumed with the idea of purdah. From behind it no call for help could be heard. An abandoned species was trapped in a forbidden world. Everything corrupt happened under the shroud, when it was off a faceless and nameless woman appeared. (164)

The veiling of Muslim women is a more complex issue in the Islamic World. People have different opinions, views and logic regarding it. Certainly, the Holy Quran requires them to behave and dress modestly—but these restrictions apply equally to men. Only one verse refers to the veiling of women, starting that the Prophet's wives should be behilid a hijab when his male guests converse with Him. So, in a way all the rules and regulations regarding veiling of the women, polygamy or any such were because of the need of the time, which has no relevance in the present time. Women of that age were weak, fragile creature so they needed protection but now women are capable enough to defend themselves.

Blasphemy is a realist novel set up in Pakistan reflecting the struggle of protagonist in the hands of his husband, who is a hypocrite. Ahhough Heer is the most important female character in the novel but there some other minor female characters which are of great importance. Cheel is one such character in the novel which plays a pivotal role in motivating Heer in her attempt to fight with Pir. In the beginning Heer thought her to be an arrogant and vindictive person but later on it was she who was a great support of Heer in her struggle for justice as she herself was a victim of Pir Sain.

The picture which emerges by reading Tehmina Durrani's *Blasphemy* is very dismal. She has depicted protagonist Heer as a victim of socio-religious customs and traditions based on the patriarchal constructs existing in the Indian sub-continent including India and Pakistan. A wife who has no individuality as she has turned into a mute spectator to all the sufferings inflicted upon her by her male counterpart. Her courage is being robbed due to respective belief imposed upon her by the society and she is unable to fight against injustice and bring positive change in her life. But later on we see that she dares to fight against all odds and adverse situations.

Through Heer, Durrani has provided an insight into the life of a woman bound in a traditionally orchestrated institutional discourses and practices that maintain the regulation of wife. Not only this but in Heer she has also depicted the desire of a woman who wants to break free from the conservative, rigid, social and religious rules and conventions of the society which subjugates her. She has raised a voice of a house-wife who has strived to free herself from the age old norms and conventions.

However, Durrani's aim seems to be in reflecting the projection of wife's status in the patriarchal society but at the same time she has depicted the power which a woman possess although being a part of a tradition bound society. A society which completely believes in the commodification of women at all levels. She dares to challenges the objectification and domestic violence inflicted on women and how they can resist patriarchal power and improve their position within the institutions of oppression. For this they have to adopt strategies to counter patriarchal values and contradict the marital assumptions responsible for their affliction. Any woman belonging to any section of the society including the most marginalized and subaltern can improve her status and can challenge the so-called male supremacy if she wishes because she has capability and ability to do so. This implies to all the women irrespective of any ethnic group.

The novel is intense because it is a reflection of Tehmina's own tortured self. The presence of truth leaves a bitter taste in those readers who want women to be dominated by Islam's misinterpreted clauses. The truth is not always sweet. The presence of autobiographical elements makes it intense. As we can see the reflection of Heer's struggle as Durrani's own struggle in her autobiography, *My Fuedal Lord.*

In her autobiography Durrani realizes that her husband Mustafa Khar deserted his previous wives because they have been weak and submissive, she tries to be less affected by his cruel treatments, and challenges him in open battle. Eventually learning to manoeuvre their fights onto his territory she writes:

> The change in me was slow but sure. I had evolved. I was no longer the timid, docile, self-effacing little girl that he married. I was becoming a woman. I felt that I had to be heard in order for him to realise when he was wrong. I obeyed whatever he would impose on me but there was now a difference. It seemed that I performed under duress. I had developed a look which conveyed defiance and disagreement. Mustafa was caught on the wrong foot. He had to reassess his strategy and evolve new tactics to cope with my diffidence. (79)

Through her writings we can see the subjugation of the Muslim women in the hands of their male counterparts but she has also depicted

these oppressed women transforming themselves into decision maker and raising to power through their own won efforts and at the same time handling all the domestic confrontations. It is she who had been courageous enough to follow these confrontations in her life and the all these works are inspired by the struggle and hardships of her own life.

Durrani being the centre of ill-treatment by her husband felt humiliated so much that at last she was able to gather courage to make decisions of her own life against her husband's wish. She was so fed up with her husband that she even fought physically with him on some occasions. There are some incidents narrated by her in the book when equally leveled her husband in aggression and behaviour which Gulam Mustafa Khar never thought before. She has tolerated many physical assault by him earlier by once when he tried to beat her by pulling her by the hair and swings her around as he use to before using his favourite threat to break every bone in her body, she attack him back by flinging at him the utensil full of steaming food that she was cooking on the stove. This happened abruptly and he didn't expect this from his wife whom he always thought to be physically weak and fragile. Feeling humiliated and also burnt he raises his hand again to beat her but realizing this she pushed him back and threatened to kill him by the knife in her hand. As she says in her own words, There was power and conviction in my tone. The days of appeasement were over. I had declared war (90).

Although standing against her husband's decision was very tough for her and she has not taken it at once but it was the result of the traumas, torture and humiliation which she has been going through from quite a long time after her marriage with him. She was a mute spectator of all his domestic violence which he inflicted even in the presence of servants, and irrespective of the opinions of her friends and relatives. There are many reasons behind her transformation into a courageous person and decision maker, among them one of the reason is her education in English medium schools and her experience of living in London.

Durrani does not follow the path of Taslima Nasreen or Ayan Hisri Ali. She has endeavoured to chalk out a path that evicts the misinterpretation of Islam. She is a modern feminist writer of the 20th century as her writings can be regarded as a template for the changing concept of women's projection in the society. The changes which are occurring in the lives of ordinary women living in a traditional society are the theme of both her novel and her autobiography. The new women of the sub-continent are now following the trajectory of resistance and empowerment. Though bound in a patriarchal marital discourse these women are trying to free themselves by challenging the technologies of subjection.

There is a wrong interpretation in the world which is clearly reflected in the novel that Islam encourages suppression and subjugation of women. Sometimes media also shows incidents relating mistreatment of women in Islamic world in a more comprehensive way. They also popularized that all the rules and regulations regarding the subjugation of women is written in Quran, the holy book of Muslims. But this is totally wrong and its misinterpretation. The Holy Quran is addressed to all Muslims, and for the most part it does not differentiate between male and female. Man and woman, it says "were created of a single soul", and are more equal in the sight of God. Women have the right to divorce, to inherit property, to conduct business and to have access to knowledge. In marriages, Islam insists on the free consent of both, the bride and groom. So girls forced to marry strangers against their will could even be deemed illegal under religious laws. The Act of banning girls from school is forbidden in Islam, which all the conservative organizations including Taliban should know. Islam on the other hand encourages all Muslims, irrespective of gender to seek knowledge from cradle to grave, from all possible sources. "To seek knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim", says holy Prophet.

> "Treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers."
>
> From the last sermon of Prophet Mohammed (SAW)

Holy Quran gives equal rights to male/female, as father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, grandparents and in the same way equal rights for husband, wife also. All the incidents regarding banning of females from education, driving are only customs belonging to certain culture, region and society and not of a particular religion.

In the present paper, I have tried to reveal the daring effort of the novelists who have dared to raise their voices against the religious hypocrisy present in the society and how the women are being subjugated in the name of a religion which gives equal rights to women like their male counterparts but which are being manipulated by some so-called religious head for their own vested interest.

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The Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion in Banjara culture

N. Shanthanaik

Abstract

Banjaras are the route cause of cultural integrity of India. This is the only biggest tribe ever remained in the cultural galaxy of India. Banjaras are known for their traditional dress, their dance and their music which are integral part of their cultural identity. I would like to focus my presentation on the cultural importance of Dharalo. Before going to Dharalo it is important to know the drastic change which is taken place in the swift of the cultural identity of Banjara. As the world knows that, the centre of attraction of Banjaras is the colourful dress of Banjara women. As I am an eye witness curiously observed the sudden changes in the culture. In 1980 I was fully aware of the changes that are taking place. In 1980s Banjara women used to go to the lanes of the weaver to exchange the goods. Like, to get some fruits from the forest, karmda, deekambli, lodhya, etc. weavers were also so generous that, they have bartered colour, colour thread for the wild fruits. They had purchased glass, old coins, red cloth and prepared phetiya, kanchali and chantey. This is a mark of luxury. So patently they were stiching the cloths, very important was lepo, ghero, astra, ghungto, lavan, kachetunero, pessamandero, makipherro, kattamodero, gundisidero, phundibhadero. When Banjara women was wearing such dress they were excluded from the so called civilized society . They use to stare them like aliens

Keywords: Karmda= Forest fruit, phetiya=Dress of women.

The Sudden Change in Culture in 1990

Most of the handlooms were stopped due to establishment of Birla Poly Fibres Company at Harihar. People rather attract towards Terri - wool, tricot, trine cloths. The sudden fall in the demand of the thread many handloom became jobless. But the co-operative handsomer were still running. Banjara women know bartering butter against the thread as per the quantity of the thread she use to give butter as they had still cows and buffalos with them. Through there was a dearth in getting thread they struggled a lot to stitch the dress. A blow immediately collapse on them was the social awareness among the first generation educated. The first generation educated were humiliated by the social taboo of Banjara dress. The indigenous people were critics by calling Lamani. The social awareness movement of the educated people attacked those women who were begging money in the cities on the occasion of the holy festival. The young girls were misused here. Not only misused the so called civilized looked down upon the Banjaras, hence a group of young people petrol the city and wherever they found these kind of begging money in the name of culture were forcefully stopped. The same social awareness movement took a leading initiation to stop wearing their traditional dress. They oppressed those girls who wear traditional dress in the marriage. Phetia was also became a costly affair. So the women folk unwillingly accepted this change.

The other reason for the sudden change was law of time. Earlier, they had pretty combine, men use to do business and women was generously stitching her cloth. But the change in work force brought a new change. Men use to sit in the home and women have to fetch firewood from the forest and sell in the city or the villages who require the firewood. This immediate shift in workforce was also the major setback to the Banjara women to accept easily available sari. The socialization of the community brings drastic change in their culture. As I have witnessed in the above mentioned decade and the developments in the later decades has drastic change in language and culture of Banjara community.

Globalization and World Trade Agreement in 2000

Since GAT and Globalization entered in India most of the oral tradition got a greater threat, centuries ago Banjara language Goarboli and its oral literature faced many hurdles. Due to the nomadic nature of Banjara, they had travelled with their herds of cattle. Most of Banjaras who travel south have retained their language and oral culture intact. Whereas the north Indian Banjaras are detached with the language Goarboli. Not just Globalization is a route cause of this change, before Globalization other regional languages have influenced on Banjara community.

The Regional Influence

Since Banjara extensively travel all over the world and settled down where ever they have travelled become minor community. This minor community people are unable to establish either their language, culture or political entity. Hence, it became very difficult for them to cope up with the indigenous language. After colonization, many indigenous languages of African continent were extinct. Similarly either the government or the community people are interested to retain their language and culture intact. As I am living in Karnataka and the regional language of Karnataka is Kannada except home I have spoken in the local language. This causes to learn Kannada words to Goarboli. So there is no Banjara word we find for "study".

Kannada-study-odu.

Telugu-study-sadvu.

Tamil-study-padch.

Hindi study-padrochi.

Similarly—we have lost many oral in global context.

We use to play some funny games like—

When some children annoyed elders use to make them laugh by the following activity:

What is in the pot? Handini kaai?

This pot consist chilly. Marchi.

What is in this pot? Handini kaai?

The pot consist salt. Noona-luna.

What is in this pot? Handini kaai?

This pot consist milk dood.

What is in the pot? Handini kaai?

This pot have curd dhai.

Shall I cut it with a sharp knife or blunt Ili charity katu ka boont charity ili charity—with sharp knife.

Mother my hand is painig Avva maro hat gayo.

Language and Issue of Inclusion and Exclusion

Language is an identity of the particular group of people. If language detached with them or they detached with the language, they do not have identity of their own. I mean to say here is, how Goarboli a language of 9 to 10 per cent of the people in India is in danger. I would like to share my personal experience to strengthen my argument in this article. Fortunately it became boon to me that I was just browsing on Banjara's.

Suddenly I found a name of a person who is resident of Delhi. I called him on his mobile which was given in the website. I was eager to know whether he is Banjara, who can speak Goarboli. But he revealed after the communication he do not know language of Banjaras. He told me that there are eleven thandas's in the suburban area of Delhi. Later he introduces me another Banjara who lives in one of the thandas's in Delhi. After meeting them I found some cultural similarities, some traditional practices. It is most unfortunate that they revealed the fact that Goarboli vanished from them. I had a doubt whether these people are lying as Banjaras. But the person apologized, Sir I am sorry I am not offering you " Saloi" a non-vegetarian dish which is known to Banjaras only. I was overwhelmed with joy that the world *saloi* is not erased from the memory of Banjaras even they have forgotten their language Goarboli. Goarboli belongs to Indo-European Language family which has a history of its own. As the great historians excavated some ponds specially built for oxen could go down and drink water.

The other evidence available to prove existence of Banjaras in the past is Dandi's reference. He calls them Lavana traders in his book *Dashakumar Charite* which supports Goarboli is as old as 10th century . Later development I am not discussing here because my main focus is on Goarboli and its present situation. As I have already narrated instance of Delhi people. I met a Banjara in Lucknow who was also unable to communicate in Goarboli. The influence of local language persuades them to forget Goarboli. Hindi becomes their mother tongue up to Uttar Pradesh and it is deep-rooted in the veins of all the people who are living in the North. As I met some Banjaras in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh who can speak Goarboli. They have history of 2500 years. If we go Amarkantak we will come to know the truth Narmada Temple was built by Reva Naik who was Banjara businessman selling *Hara, Bhara, Amla*. According to the local myth Reva Naik travelled from Rajasthan to that place along with his herd of cattle and oxen. It was a thick forest then, they found difficulty to travel ten to fifteen kilometer per day. He decided to stay for a night. In his dream mother Narmada appeared and reveals wish to have her temple built by Reva. But with humbleness, he replies. "How can I build a temple to you mother as I am petty businessman". Next morning when he woke up he found all his *Hara, Bhara, Amla* became gold. He built a temple to Narmada, near the temple we also find Revakund. Later he became chief of Reva state. Though, this history has no evidences and written record. We find Revanaik's statue behind the idol of Narmada. Entire Madhya Pradesh knows this fact that, before it was called Madhya Pradesh the entire province was identified by Reva state. These reminiscence of Banjaras and their language Goarboli are not properly documented in Indian History.

Goarboli And Its Feature

There are no theories available to prove origin of Banjaras. Some people say that, they are Romanian merchants travelled from Rome to India and settled, some say they are native Indians but scattered all over the world. During Hitler's Nazi supremacy he massacred thousands of Banjaras who were the business people stalled and carrying petty business in Germany. It is unique that these people had one language Goarboli.

According to some linguists, Goarboli is a mixer of Devanagari, Marathi, Konkani, Khadiboli, Guajarati languages. For example, Marathi speakers use;

Marathi - Goarboli

kaio = kaira

porga = chora

kaijhale = kaivego

Similarly Konkani

Konkani Gorboli

kitre = kaire

Gujarathi = Gorboli

kemcho = kivcho

majema cho = majamachu

kuno kave = khanokhade

When we see these similarities with the Indian languages Banjaras are Indians rather to the outsider. Goarboli is language which has unique features. I would like to narrate each and every important factors of Goarboli, in the mean time it is also important to discuss the colonial and global inceptions of Goarboli.

Goarboli and Goar Banjaras are specifying themselves through the communication. They never include others into their group. Hence they pronounce the outsider as follow:

Themselves	outsiders	English meaning
goar	kor	man
thandri	kori	woman
chora	kunda	boy
chori	kundi	girl

This is how demarking others from them this demarcation is still prevailing among the Banjaras. the metaphor which narrates the past glory of Banjaras is.

Dadi dai dalya ghal
Chato kat?
U:ndar lege
U:indar kat?
Daldam pesge
Dalada kat?
Pani bharago
Pani kat?
Dhor pige
Dhor kat?
Chor lege
Chor kat?
jad chadage
Gad kat balage?
Balago
Rak kat? vadgi
Koliy kat? gudage
Granny granny give me rice
Where is the spoon?
The rat has taken away
Where is the rat?
It went into the hole
Where is the hole?
Filled with water
Where is water?
It is drunk by the cattle
Where are the cattle?
Thieves were stolen
Where are the thieves?
They climbed the tree
Where is the tree?
The tree is burnt
Where is the ash?
Ash is flying off

Where is the Charcoal?

Charcoal is hide in the earth.

This rhyme of the children gives pathetic downfall of Banjara's business, their culture and their tradition in the reign of colonial rulers. They lost forest; hence, their cattle were stolen by sanction of Forest Act by the colonizer. Though, they had lost their petty business, they were not left free. The colonizers declared them as "Notified tribes" along with many other tribals of the soil. In due course of time Banjaras who travelled towards south forgotten their Gypsy attitude and settled down with the originality of Goarboli. Those Banjaras who remained in the north were influenced by Hindi as well as English detached with Goarboli. This process took place almost 400 years . Now, we are identifying them only through their clan names like, Badtya, Banhot, Vislavat, Karmthot, etc.

Reasons for Detachment of Goarboli in North

1. In Hindi spoken areas like, Rajasthan, Delhi, U.P. Goarboli is totally forgotten. The reason might be influence of Hindi. As I had discussion with one of the Banjara from Lucknow, who narrated they following north Indian marriage practices rather than Banjara marriage practice which is unique in nature. Suppose a Banjara boy marries a Banjara girl, we start the ceremony with "Golakhayero" exchange of sweet. The Bridegroom must hold katari, a dagger in his hand. This has a cultural meaning. When Prithvi Raj Chavan was abducted Samyuktha from the almost seventh round of fire rounds. The prince who was marrying Samyuktha had no weapons to protect her. So Banjaras believes that, while marriage they must hold a dagger, so they can at least resist with the enemy or anybody who bothers them in the marriage ceremony. This practice is disappeared in Delhi, U.P., Rajasthan. They are bringing grooms on the back of horse which is not in practice.
2. As the culture dies, practices also dies, as practices vanish language will also become abandon. The colonial and Muslim ruling was a real threat to the Banjaras both in Delhi as well as Rajasthan. The other reasons they evacuated from north was small business, conversion of Muslim and also other factors. Those who travelled towards south retained their language.
3. They retained Goarboli because the language was not understood by the South region people. They made use of the opportunity to covert Goarboli as a language of spy.
4. The Banjaras migrated from north scattered almost all parts of south India except Kerala. They settled near hillocks on the bank of streams so that their cattle can get fodder and water.

5. They settled in separate Thandas which means group without the shadow of civilized people. Their problems are different, they were not allowed to enter the villages. After 1860's Forest Act which was enforced by the British and declared all tribals as 'Notified Tribes ' the innocent Banjaras become prey. They left forest and built their thanda's on the border of forest area.
6. Naturally they accepted all the laws enforced by the British rulers which was irritable. They started sending their children to the school which are providing education in the local language.
7. When I got promotion to high school, a form was given me to fill, while filling the form, I got struck at particular column in which it was written **Your Mother Tongue**, Goarboli/Kannada what ? My father who is illiterate unable to resolve my dilemma. The problem forced me to enquire the person who was standing. He says local language Kannada should be filled in that column. But my innocent young mind was not ready to accept that truth. How Kannada would be my mother tongue? That question is still lingering in my mind. How the local language dominate on the tribal language like, Goarboli, Kadukuruba, Hallakki vakkaliga, Siddi,Gouli, Malekudiya, Vadda, Korcha, Lambani, Hakkipikki, Handijogi, Sindhol, and many other unidentified tribes who have their own languages which are submerged and segregated by the local languages.
8. At the global context, Goarboli and other similar languages are naturally losing their culture importance. The Banjara dress Phetiya, Kauchali, Chanitiya, Chudo, Chudi, Baliya, Gunngato, Chotla are almost vanished from Banjara word terminology. As all Banjara women are wearing modern dress, they do not wear what they suppose to wear.

As the culture dies automatically language also dies. What I intended here is, I should not quote or copy the colonial thinkers who have commented on Goarboli. As native speaker I have to find out the way to retain my language intact. First, the Banjaras have to understand local language politics. As one of my neighbour said, 'I think your son do not understand Kannada that is why he is away from the group'. Then we had the notion that it was true. We immediately started code switching and code mixing whenever we talk with them we use to talk in Kannada . When my wife and me continued we speak in Goarboli. It is unconsciously comes to our mind and continued the same. My children neither perfect in Kannada nor in English nor in Goarboli. Certainly languages are affected by the globalization, as we are practicing modern way of life and ignoring indigenous culture. As I am witnessing native

culture in the villages . So also egg fried rice, Gobi Manchurian, small bars this create impact on Goarboli.

Here the word purposefully used avva—mother which is Kannada word instead of word yadi. May be the Kannada language influenced much on them. After the agreement GAT and globalization many changes we have seen in social and cultural life. Some of the important changes I would like to mention here are:

1. Banjara girls were practicing dance before one month to the Deepavali. In some of the thanda 'it is stopped'. "mera" which is unique practice where all thanda girls use to go to every house in thanda and wishing them. Let the Deepavali brings good things to you all. The English education forced them to speak English rather then Goarboli. —varshedad khor davali bhaiya to no mera, today girls are more anglicized, they cannot speak Goarboli.
2. Waja: is the unique practice in which they remember their deity Sevabhaya, Mariyamma is rarely found.
3. Some rituals like third day after the death which is called 'dado' in some thanda peoples stopped the word which is attached to it. Kandya is already forgotten.
4. Saloi—is a dish which is vanished long back.

Unknown Words

Saloi non vegetarian dish

Phetiya; dress used by banjara women.

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Literature of Indian English and Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion is an attempt made to re-engineering the marginalized section of Indian who are living their life in a forlorn hopes. This is compilation of 26 different essays, majority among them are dealt on Dalit and Adivasi literature. The term inclusion and exclusion are parentheses to those who have not lived their life as they are. They have been ignored by the so called civilized society, in the name of civilization, modernity, education, etc. The uneducated foarmer knows about the rains in which the seeds should be sown. The tribal knows in which tree have water in it's branch. The same tribes men know how to escape when a tusker attacks, a tiger jumped on them. The educated illiterates are thousands who are miserably failed in their life. Adivasis living in Hadies are never regretting for their minimal availabilities and facilities. Hence, this work will be the good document for the scholars who are pursuing Ph.D. on similar topics and those scholors who are unaware of the problems of marginalized. The Dalits and Adivasis are broken people who are like fluid which can take any shape as we put them in a frame. This Collection tries to unveil thousands of issues related to the life of Dalit and Adivasis.

Dr. N. Shantha Naik, is a Professor of English at Vijayanagara Sri Krishna Devaraya University, Ballari. He is also a creative writer. He has written novels and plays in Kannada language as well as in English. He has edited many collections of articles in English on different issues. Some of his works are well appreciated and well received by the public as well as acadimic circle. His play *Patragalu* (Charaters) was awarded with B.V. Karant prestigious award. He has also got Patil Puttappa award, Mskeri M.K Naik award. Dr. Naik is a first Banjara writer who is documenting the realities of Banjara tribe. He is involved in preparing Banjara Culture and Language Dictionary in English, Kannada, and Hindi languages. His *Feminist Psyche in World Women Novelists, Teaching English Language through Literature, Dalit Discourse* and many other works are well received in the academic circle.

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